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ABSTRACT

A study of higher education graduates participating in South Australian technical and further education (TAFE) courses concentrated on the reasons they chose TAFE courses and how appropriate they found them. Survey instruments were developed, and a census of 3,731 higher education graduates who enrolled in the South Australia Department of Employment, Training, and Education courses was conducted. Previous research on the articulation of higher education graduates to TAFE was analyzed. Findings indicated the most likely reason for higher education graduates to undertake TAFE studies was for personal development, followed closely by "to gain practical skills not obtained in my higher qualification" and "for interest or recreation." Females were significantly more likely than males to choose "for interest or recreation" even when only enrollments in the labor force were considered. Unemployed persons were significantly more likely to choose "to attain English language skills" compared to those employed full and part time. Over 88 percent of enrollments indicated TAFE studies were very appropriate or appropriate to fulfilling the reasons for undertaking their studies. Around three-fourths of respondents rated each aspect of teaching style and course design to be appropriate. (Contains 21 references and survey instruments.) (YLB)

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Issues regarding higher education graduates in vocational education and training

MARK C WERNER

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Issues regarding higher education graduates in vocational education and training

MARK C WERNER

Editor's note:
Since this survey, the South Australian Department of Technical and Further Education (known as SA DETAFE) has become the South Australian Department of Employment, Training and Education (known as SA DETE).

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Executive summary

The number of higher education graduates who enrol in vocational education and training (VET) courses is on the increase. The latest available Australian data shows that over 40 000 higher education graduates were enrolled in TAFE in 1996. This represents just under 3 per cent of the total number of people who enrol in VET each year. In fact the people who enrolled in a VET program during 1996 had nearly 42 800 university degree or postgraduate qualifications between them (noting a few people may have had more than one such qualification).

Information reported in this study also shows that a similar number of people who have not completed their university studies transfer from university to a TAFE or other VET provider each year, bringing the total number of VET enrollees with a university background to 6 to 7 per cent each year around Australia.

Due to being aware of a number of university graduates enrolling in South Australian Technical and Further Education (TAFE) courses, the South Australian Department of Employment, Training and Education (SA DETE)—then known as the South Australian Department of Technical and Further Education—commissioned this project to formally investigate the extent to which higher education graduates participate in South Australian TAFE courses, the reasons why they choose to do so, and how appropriate they find TAFE courses to be to their needs.

The study

SA DETE commissioned this project on higher education graduates participating in South Australian TAFE courses, concentrating on the reasons why they choose to do so, and how appropriate they find TAFE courses. The appropriateness of teaching styles and curriculum design to higher education graduates' needs were also investigated and possible policy responses to the research findings suggested.

Survey instruments were developed and a census of 3731 higher education graduates who enrolled in SA DETE courses in 1995 was conducted to investigate the aforementioned issues.

A profile of respondents

- Female respondents made up 60.5 per cent of the sample and males 39.5 per cent.
- The higher education cohort of TAFE students is a mature-age cohort (mean age 38.6 years), comprising a group of people who have many life and work experiences behind them.
- Four fifths of the sample held a degree or higher qualification whilst the other fifth held an undergraduate diploma.
- 52.0 per cent of respondents were in full-time employment, and 25.6 per cent in part-time employment, at the time of enrolling in their 1995 TAFE studies.
- A significantly greater percentage of males, 69.9 per cent, were in full-time employment compared to only 40.3 per cent of females.
- 44.9 per cent of enrolments were in non-award courses only.
- 34.4 per cent of enrolments were in the initial vocational stream 3100.
- The most likely field of study for enrolments was 'TAFE Multi-field education' (33.6%), followed by 'Business administration, economics' (25.9%) and 'Art, humanities and social sciences' (10.7%).
- 56.5 per cent of enrolments indicated that the fields of study for the TAFE enrolment and highest higher education qualification were not at all similar.

Reasons for undertaking TAFE studies in 1995

- The most likely reason for higher education graduates to undertake TAFE studies was for personal development, followed closely by the reasons 'to gain practical skills not obtained in my higher qualification' and 'for interest or recreation'.
- Comments made by respondents highlighted the fact that TAFE is necessary for many to acquire practical skills not provided in the higher education sector, even some essential practical skills required to conform to government regulations.
- The granting of credit in TAFE courses for prior studies undertaken was an important factor for only a small minority of higher education graduates contemplating TAFE studies.

Analysis of reasons by other factors

- Females were found to be significantly more likely than males to agree with the 'for interest or recreation' reason even when only enrolments in the labour force were considered.
- The unemployed were significantly more likely to agree with the 'to attain English language skills' reason compared to the full and part-time employed.

- Those who undertook 1995 TAFE studies two or less years since completing their highest qualification were more likely to do so for employment reasons than those who undertook their TAFE studies three or more years after completing their highest qualification.

Appropriateness of TAFE course

- 88.1 per cent of enrolments indicated that the TAFE studies were 'very appropriate' or 'appropriate' to fulfilling the reasons for undertaking their studies.
- Levels of appropriateness were found to be independent of reasons for undertaking TAFE studies, sex and age.

Appropriateness of TAFE teaching style

- Around three quarters or more of respondents rated each aspect of teaching style to be appropriate. However, some respondents who found aspects of teaching style inappropriate indicated that, *on balance*:
    - the pacing of courses was too slow
    - the amount of contact with teachers was too little
    - the amount of feedback was too little
    - the repetition of delivery was too much
    - the course lacked an appropriate challenge
    - provision of printed materials was too infrequent
- Some respondents commented that their lecturers did not have sufficient teaching skills.
- Findings revealed that younger and older higher education graduates have different needs in TAFE teaching styles.

Appropriateness of TAFE course design

- Around three quarters or more of respondents rated each aspect of TAFE course design to be appropriate. However, some respondents who found aspects of TAFE course design inappropriate indicated that, *on balance*:
    - there was too much theory and not enough practical
    - the length of modules or courses was too short
    - there was too little choice of subjects/modules and options
- Respondents expressed a strong preference for a graded assessment system rather than the competency-based system.

Adequacy of TAFE services and facilities

- In comparing TAFE services and facilities with those of the institution of their highest higher education qualification, respondents, on average, considered TAFE as having:
    - a greater range of course equipment
    - lower standard of library services and facilities

  - inefficient and low standard administrative procedures
- Some respondents commented that:
  - out-of-course hours access to TAFE facilities and services needs to be greater, particularly for those with employment or family commitments
  - the provision of up-to-date equipment and software be ensured so that courses are relevant to current employer and community needs
  - RPL procedures are too bureaucratic and outweigh any positive benefits

Possible policy responses to issues raised

The generally provided opinion by higher education graduates is that the 1995 TAFE courses undertaken were appropriate for fulfilling their reasons. This suggests that no urgent policy responses are required to cater for this cohort of clients.

However, should TAFE wish to attract more clients from the higher education graduate market, the survey identified a number of main areas where policy initiatives might further this end. Identified areas of dissatisfaction and possible solutions are tabled below.

Area of dissatisfaction	**Possible solutions**
courses paced too slowly courses lacked a challenge	expand the range of self-paced courses have advanced activities available for 'brighter' students stream courses
lack of access to lecturers outside lecture times	establish a lecturing staff structure based more at TAFE institutes schedule times for students to access lecturers outside formal lecture times
lecturers lacked adequate teaching skills	require lecturers to have undergone appropriate teacher training assess potential lecturers' teaching abilities prior to taking classes
adult learners treated the same way as less mature school leavers	make lecturers aware that mature learners may be taking their course
courses too theoretical	maintain or increase the practical and 'real world' nature of TAFE courses
competency-based assessment	explore the possibility of providing graded assessment
out-of-date equipment	ensure course equipment is up to date
too limited access to TAFE services and facilities	make TAFE facilities and services available during out-of-course hours
inefficient administrative services	explore ways of making administrative services more streamlined and efficient
RPL processes too bureaucratic	explore ways of making RPL processes more streamlined and efficient

Future research possibilities

An area that stood out with a consistent trend in differences of opinion was the appropriateness of TAFE teaching style in relation to age.

Younger and older respondents had significant differences in opinion on the appropriateness of course pacing, amount of teacher contact, repetition of delivery, challenge of the course, and the length of modules offered.

Given these differences, research ought to be conducted on TAFE's role in the provision of vocational education and training for the adult or mature-age market and whether or not TAFE is catering to the needs of different age groups.

The basis of research for this report could also be extended to a national level to identify differences between the States and Territories in the levels of higher education graduates undertaking TAFE courses and the reasons why they do.

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Talk of student pathways in tertiary education, or of articulation between the vocational education and training and higher education sectors, and one will more than likely consider articulation *from* vocational education and training *to* higher education. Relatively speaking, consideration is rarely given to the reverse situation, that of articulation *from* the higher education *to* the vocational education and training sector.

Intuition may lead one to believe that this so called 'reverse' articulation involves only a small number of students compared with those articulating from vocational education and training to higher education. Nothing could be further from the truth! As an example, the Australian Vice Chancellors' Committee's Credit Transfer Working Party identified that:

> *. . . 12 700 vocational education and training students moved to the University sector, and 10 400 university students moved to vocational education and training.* (NBEET 1994, p.7)

Less known and researched are the reasons why some with a higher education background move to vocational education and training. Of particular interest are the reasons why some with a *complete* higher education background should choose to later enrol in a vocational education or training course.

Further, considering the not insignificant numbers moving from the higher education to the vocational education and training sector, a number of issues arise. These include the appropriateness of teaching styles and curriculum design in the vocational education and training sector to those with a higher education background. Should these be found to be inappropriate, then policy initiatives may be required to cater better to the needs of the higher education background cohort in the vocational education and training sector.

Due to being aware of a number of university graduates enrolling in South Australian Technical and Further Education (TAFE) courses, the South Australian Department of Employment, Training and Education (SA DETE) commissioned this project to investigate formally a number of areas. These include the extent to which higher education graduates participate in South Australian TAFE courses, the reasons why they choose to do so, and how appropriate they found TAFE courses to be to their needs. The appropriateness of teaching styles and curriculum design to higher education graduates' needs were also investigated and possible policy responses to the research findings suggested.

1.2 Project objectives

The main objectives of the project are to find out the reasons why those holding a higher education qualification later undertake a vocational education or training course, and how appropriate the course was to their needs. General background data on the numbers of higher education graduates in vocational education and training and in which areas they are located will also be sought, along with an investigation of other issues related to higher education graduates' participation in vocational education and training.

The project will seek to establish whether or not higher education graduates' primary reasons for undertaking a vocational education or training course include, for example:

- to gain practical skills not obtained or obtainable in a higher education course
- to increase one's chances of securing employment
- to satisfy a requirement of an employer
- to increase one's chances of promotion in current employment
- to assist in embarking on a different career path
- for personal development
- purely for recreation or personal interest
- to be eligible for financial assistance (eg. AUSTUDY/ABSTUDY)

Further information will also be sought from higher education graduates to establish the appropriateness of their vocational education and training course to fulfilling their needs. For example, did higher education graduates find:

- the teaching style to be appropriate?
- course content to be useful?
- the course to be generally appropriate to their needs?

General background data on the number of higher education graduates in vocational education and training courses and the main areas in which they are located will be sought. For example, are they more likely to be found in operatives courses or in paraprofessional/technician initial vocational courses? Further, are those from an arts or humanities higher education background more likely to participate in vocational education and training than those from other higher education disciplines?

Having established findings from the aforementioned investigations, consideration will then be given to possible policy responses.

In summary then, the main objectives of the project may be stated as being:

- to establish the main reasons why higher education graduates undertake a vocational education or training course
- to establish higher education graduates' perceived appropriateness of the vocational education and training course to their needs, including the appropriateness of teaching style, curriculum design and course content, and to suggest possible policy responses in light of the findings

1.3 Methodology

For the purposes of this project, 'higher education graduates' is taken to mean those who hold a diploma or equivalent qualification, or higher qualification from one of the following types of institution:

- university
- institute of technology
- college of advanced education
- teachers' college

Further, the vocational education and training courses to be investigated in this project are those technical and further education (TAFE) subjects or modules in streams 2100 or above which were administered by SA DETE in 1995.

Although quite aware of the fact that vocational education and training courses are offered by providers other than TAFE, the time and resources available for this project did not justify the effort that would be required to try and obtain appropriate data from other vocational education and training providers. In any case, it was thought that most private providers would either not be able to identify higher education graduates undertaking their courses or be unwilling to provide contact details of their students for privacy reasons.

The project methodology was as follows:

1. DETE to provide general background data on higher education graduates enrolled in TAFE modules (excluding stream 1000) for 1995 including:
   - general numbers involved
   - areas located (that is, in which streams and field of study)
   - age

   thereby providing indicative information.
2. Obtain contact and TAFE course details of higher education graduates that were enrolled in TAFE modules (excluding stream 1000) in 1995, namely:

Contact details:
- name
- postal address
- telephone number

TAFE course details:
- course/module name(s)
- stream
- field(s) of study
- award level (if applicable)

3 Develop a survey instrument for conducting a mail survey of those obtained in 2.

4 Pilot the survey instrument developed in 3 on a sample of 30 identified in 2 and, based on feedback, make appropriate adjustments to the survey instrument.

5 Conduct a census of those obtained in 2 using the final survey instrument developed in 4.

6 Input data obtained (excluding TAFE diploma holder returns) into a database designed by NCVER/NTMRC. (TAFE diploma holder returns to be directed to DETE for their own research purposes.)

7 Analyse database information available and qualitative data provided in survey instruments.

8 Prepare draft report for comment by steering committee members.

9 Prepare and lodge final report.

2 Previous research on the articulation of higher education graduates to TAFE

2.1 Recognition of articulation from higher education to TAFE

Despite a good deal of research prior to the early 1990s investigating cross sector transfer between TAFE and higher education in Australia, all was concerned with the TAFE to higher education direction. Many issues were investigated including credit transfer, the development of guidelines to assist TAFE graduates in gaining entry to university studies, and the progress and performance of TAFE graduates in higher education.

It appears that the higher education to TAFE pathway was not even recognised by many as a possibility during this period. For example, in a report investigating cross-sector transfer between middle-level TAFE and degree courses (Lloyd & Standish 1987, p.42), a flow diagram of student pathways was provided clearly showing the TAFE to degree pathway but no recognition of the degree to TAFE possibility. Indeed, Golding (1993, p.2) in his research into the recognition of university to TAFE transfer found that until late 1992, virtually all papers, reports and research 'virtually ignored higher education to TAFE transfer'.

It is interesting to note that at least as early as 1991, the occurrence of transfer from the university to non-university education sector was internationally recognised in a report from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). This report stated that many countries including the United States have observed an:

> *. . . increase in the so-called 'reverse transfer', namely a growing number of university students and graduates, mainly from academic disciplines, and seeking a double qualification, who apply for professionally-oriented courses offered by the NUS [non-university system].* (OECD 1991, p.76)

Formal recognition of the inter-sectoral articulation from the higher education to the vocational education and training sector in Australia was first given by Golding and Eedle (1993) and Golding (1993).

The recognition of this so-called 'reverse' articulation occurred mainly due to a broadening research scope with respect to the investigation of credit transfer between the higher education and vocational education and training sectors.

Also in 1993, the National Board of Employment, Education and Training (NBEET 1993, p.5) in giving an estimation of the position in the main areas of credit transfer, not only recognised university to TAFE articulation, but also that credit in this direction occurred at a higher rate than in the TAFE to university direction.

A main reason often provided for reverse articulation not being earlier researched in greater depth is the unavailability of data identifying higher education background students in TAFE. For example, the NBEET recognised that:

> *Whilst statistics on credit transfer from TAFE-to-higher education may be readily accessible from university data, statistics on other transfers, e.g. higher education to TAFE or transfers within TAFE, are not so readily accessible.* (NBEET 1993, p.11)

Also, Golding, in his work of university and TAFE intersectoral comparisons (Golding 1994a, 1994c), found that:

> *The quality of the TAFE data able to be derived varies considerably across TAFE institutions and across States. In 1990, nearly half the data on previous university backgrounds of TAFE commencers was not available at these award levels [initial vocation award levels at Certificate, Advanced Certificate and Associate Diploma level]. In 1993, approximately one quarter of the data on prior tertiary backgrounds of TAFE commencers was unavailable.* (Golding 1995a, p.37)

In seeking previous university enrolment data of TAFE students, the National TAFE Chief-Executives Committee (NTCC 1995) made the observation that:

> *Much of this data proved difficult to extract largely because TAFE systems have been previously unaware of, or underestimated the extent of, university to TAFE articulation. If the information was not captured at enrolment it proved extremely difficult to capture at a later date.*
>
> (NTCC 1995, p.15)

Data insufficiencies still impede research on reverse articulation today. Although the *Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard* (AVETMISS) requests 'Prior Educational Achievement', this description identifies only the type of qualification attained (ACVETS 1995, p.327). Nowhere does the standard identify the educational institution or sector from which the prior qualification was obtained.

2.2 Magnitude of 'reverse' articulation

A commonly held assumption is that what articulation occurs between TAFE and universities is predominantly upward, that is, from TAFE to university. However, indications are that reverse articulation is more likely. Golding (1995a, p.41) found for Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) data that 7232 (5%) of the 150 698 university undergraduate course commencers in 1993 had TAFE backgrounds. On the other hand, the Office of Training and Further

Education (OFTE) data revealed that at least 12 814 (18%) of the 72 275 TAFE commencers at TAFE associate diploma, advanced certificate or certificate level in Victoria in 1993, had a university or college of advanced education background.

> *There is very active traffic in both directions between TAFE and higher education, with more movement from higher education to TAFE than the other way round. More than half of the students moving in each direction have previously enrolled in more than one tertiary course.*
> (Golding et al. 1995, p.7)

Data from the pilot (Dawe 1993) also provides some indication of the magnitude of reverse articulation. Here, it was found that 6 per cent of TAFE graduates had obtained a university degree, graduate diploma or higher qualification prior to undertaking their TAFE course.

The NTCC (1995) investigated in detail 1992 and 1993 data on TAFE enrollees with a university background. Overall, their findings were very similar to those revealed from Dawe's *1993 National client follow-up survey of vocational education graduates* data (Dawe 1993), namely, that:

> *. . . approximately 7 per cent or 54 891 TAFE students/enrolments in 1992 and 75 635 TAFE students/enrolments in 1993 had a university background prior to commencing TAFE.* (NTCC 1995, p.33)

Here, 'university background' includes students who had completed or attempted university study. Further, the NTCC indicated that it was not known if individual States and Territories used the same definitions here.

Table 2.1 shows the NTCC's findings by State and Territory. Most State and Territory figures available fall within a fairly narrow range apart from those for Queensland which indicated a much higher percentage of TAFE students/enrolments with a university background, namely, 13.9 per cent and 9.6 per cent for 1992 and 1993 respectively. This may be due to Queensland State authorities applying a different interpretation of 'university background' to that of the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) and other States supplying data. It is interesting to note, however, that Millican (1995, p.6) used enrolment data provided by TAFE Queensland to find that 9 per cent and 10 per cent of TAFE enrollees in 1992 and 1993 respectively had a previous university background.

Overall for 1992 and 1993, the percentage of South Australian TAFE students/enrolments with a university background, 5 per cent, was, apart from Queensland, roughly in line with those for the other States and Territories.

2.3 General background data on reverse articulation

Previously published general background data on reverse articulation is available from three main sources; namely, studies by the NTCC, Golding, and Millican. The NTCC study (NTCC 1995) provides general national and State/Territory statistics on those with a university

Table 2.1: University background of TAFE students/enrolments by State, 1992 and 1993

1992

State or Territory	**With university background**						**No university background**		**Total TAFE students enrolled**	
	Complete university background		Incomplete university background		Total					
	N	*Row %*	*N*	*Row %*	*N*	*Row %*	*N*	*Row %*	*N*	*Row %*
NSW*										
Vic	7 175	2.5	5 560	2.0	12 735	4.5	270 509	95.5	283 244	100.0
Qld	21 004	8.9	11 723	5.0	32 727	13.9	203 436	86.1	236 163	100.0
WA*	2 429	1.9	2 072	1.6	4 501	3.5	122 995	96.5	127 496	100.0
SA*	3 386	3.8	685	0.8	4 071	4.6	83 953	95.4	88 024	100.0
ACT**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NT*	432	2.6	425	2.6	857	5.2	15 475	94.8	16 332	100.0
Tas**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Aust	**34 426**	**4.6**	**20 465**	**2.7**	**54 891**	**7.3**	**696 368**	**92.7**	**751 259**	**100.0**

1993

State or Territory	*N*	*Row %*	*N*	*Row %*	*N*	*Row %*	*N*	*Row %*	*N*	*Row %*
NSW*	11 044	3.2	9 151	2.6	20 195	5.8	328 397	94.2	348 592	100.0
Vic	9 661	3.1	9 275	3.0	18 936	6.2	288 633	93.8	307 569	100.0
Qld	14 474	5.5	10 678	4.1	25 152	9.6	238 191	90.4	263 343	100.0
WA*	3 148	2.4	2 395	1.9	5 543	4.3	123 224	95.7	128 767	100.0
SA*	3 064	3.7	1 167	1.4	4 231	5.1	79 339	94.9	83 570	100.0
ACT*	453	2.7	361	2.1	814	4.8	16 146	95.2	16 960	100.0
NT*	289	2.3	475	3.8	764	6.2	11 614	93.8	12 378	100.0
Tas**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Aust	**42 133**	**3.6**	**33 502**	**2.9**	**75 635**	**6.5**	**1 085 544**	**93.5**	**1 161 179**	**100.0**

* Data provided by the NCVER, otherwise, individual State or Territory data used

** Data not provided

Source: NTCC 1995, pp.67–68

background in TAFE for the years 1992 and 1993. Golding's work (Golding & Eedle 1993; Golding 1994b, 1995a, 1995c) deals primarily with intersectoral articulation between higher education institutions and TAFE in Victoria, and includes analysis of data obtained via questionnaire surveys. Similarly, Millican's work (Millican 1995) on university to TAFE articulation in Queensland uses data obtained via a questionnaire survey administered in 1994.

The following general background data is primarily from the NTCC study and is supplemented, where indicated, by the Golding and Millican studies.

2.3.1 Completeness of university background

On the whole for Australia, those TAFE students with a university background were more likely to have a complete rather than incomplete university background. The proportion of TAFE students with a complete university education was compared with the proportion of those with an incomplete university background by State and Territory. Those in TAFE in South Australia were revealed to be far more likely to have a complete university background and much less likely to have an incomplete university background compared with those in other States or Territories (see table 2.2). This may at least partly be explained by the poorer employment prospects for university graduates in this State compared with the other States and Territories for which data was available.

Table 2.2: TAFE students/enrolments with a previous university background by completeness of university background by State/Territory, 1992–1993

State or Territory	1992		1993	
	% of TAFE students with a complete university background	% of TAFE students with an incomplete university background	% of TAFE students with a complete university background	% of TAFE students with an incomplete university background
NSW*			55	45
Vic	56	44	51	49
Qld	64	36	58	42
WA*	54	46	57	43
SA*	83	17	72	28
ACT*			56	44
NT*	50	50	38	62
Tas				
Australia	63	37	56	44

* Data provided by the NCVER, otherwise, individual State or Territory data used

Source: NTCC 1995, pp.69

2.3.2 Age of TAFE students with a university background

Table 2.3 shows the NTCC's findings related to the age distribution of TAFE students with a university background by State and Territory. Around a third of TAFE students with a university background were in the 20 to 29 age cohort and another third in the 30 to 39 age cohort, for both South Australia and Australia as a whole. Thus around two thirds of South Australian TAFE students with university backgrounds were aged between 20 and 40 years.

Table 2.3: TAFE students/enrolments with a previous university background by age by State/Territory

Age	1992						1993							
	% of university students with a university background by age						% of university students with a university background by age							
	Vic	*Qld*	*WA**	*SA**	*NT**	*Aust*	*NSW**	*Vic*	*Qld*	*WA**	*SA**	*ACT**	*NT**	*Aust*
<20	6	5	6	5	11	5	7	5	4	6	5	8	11	5
20–29	43	31	36	33	35	34	43	44	32	37	34	37	38	38
30–39	29	31	31	31	29	30	26	29	31	29	30	27	27	29
40–49	15	22	17	23	15	20	17	16	23	17	22	16	19	19
50–59	4	7	5	6	3	6	5	4	7	6	6	5	3	6
60+	1	1	2	2		1	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	1
Not given	2	3	3	2	7	3	1	1	2	2	1	6	1	2
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**102**	**100**	**99**	**101**	**100**	**101**	**99**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

* Data provided by the NCVER, otherwise, individual State or Territory data used.

Source: NTCC 1995, p.72.

2.3.3 Stream of study

To assist the reader in coming to terms with the stream classification of TAFE courses, both brief and detailed descriptions of each TAFE stream are provided in appendix A.

Data on the stream in which South Australian TAFE students with a university background enrolled in 1992 and 1993 are provided in table 2.4. As was the case for Australia as a whole, South Australian TAFE students with a university background were most likely to have enrolled in a stream 3100 course with around a quarter doing so (compared with 17–21 per cent for Australia). Stream 3221 courses were the next most popular in South Australia with 16.2 per cent and 20.2 per cent enrolling in these in 1992 and 1993 respectively.

Table 2.4: South Australian TAFE enrolments with a previous university background by stream, 1992 and 1993

Stream		1992		1993	
		N	%	N	%
1000	Recreation, leisure and personal enrichment	513	10.6	419	8.2
2100	Basic education and employment skills	410	8.5	531	10.4
2200	Education preparation	183	3.8	198	3.9
3100	Initial vocational courses—operatives	1 237	25.5	1 212	23.8
3211	Courses which grant partial exemption to recognised trade courses	17	0.4	21	0.4
3212	Complete trade courses	36	0.7	47	0.9
3221	Courses which grant partial exemption to other skills courses	785	16.2	1 032	20.2
3222	Complete other skills courses	538	11.1	505	9.9
3300	Trade technician/ trade supervisory	239	4.9	218	4.3
3400	Para-professional/ technician	0	0.0	0	0.0
3500	Para-professional/ higher technician	471	9.7	438	8.6
3600	Professional	89	1.8	69	1.4
4100	Courses subsequent to an initial vocational course—at operative level	136	2.8	222	4.4
4200	Courses subsequent to an initial vocational course—at a skilled level	112	2.3	97	1.9
4300	Courses subsequent to an initial vocational course—at a trade level	28	0.6	47	0.9
4400	Courses subsequent to an initial vocational course—at a para-professional/ technical level	0	0.0	4	0.1
4500	Courses subsequent to an initial vocational course—at a para-professional/ higher technician level or higher	58	1.2	37	0.7
Total		**4 852**	**100.0**	**5 097**	**100.0**

Source: NTCC 1995, p.73

2.3.4 Field of study

The 'Business, administration, economics' field of study was the most popularly enrolled in field of study for Australian TAFE students with a university background with around a third enrolling in this field of study (see table 2.5). The 'Engineering, surveying' field of study was the second most popular with around 13 per cent enrolling in same. These findings of the NTCC (1995, p.41) are consistent with those of Golding (1994a, p.6), Golding et al. (1995, p.10) and Millican (1995, pp.6–7).

For South Australia, although the 'Business, administration, economics' field of study was the most popular, only around 22 per cent of South Australian TAFE enrollees with a university background were to be found here. The next two most popular fields of study were 'Arts, humanities and social sciences' and 'Science', with around 16 per cent and 14 per cent of South Australian TAFE enrollees with a university background enrolling in these respectively. These second and third most popular fields of study differ from those for Australia as whole.

2.3.5 Time elapsed between completion of university qualification and enrolment in TAFE

Only data from one State in the NTCC's study, namely Queensland, enabled them to study the time elapsed between when university graduates graduated and when they subsequently enrolled in a TAFE course (NTCC 1995, p.44). They found that approximately a third of all student enrolments with a completed university background commenced TAFE within two years of graduating from university, whilst another third did not commence a TAFE course until ten or more years after university graduation.

2.4 Reasons why reverse articulation occurs

Although there may now be a greater awareness of reverse articulation, the reasons why those with a higher education background enrol in a vocational education or training course have been little researched. The majority of work in this area has been conducted by Golding in his studies of higher education to TAFE transfer in Victoria. Further data is also available from Millican's Queensland study of university to TAFE articulation, in which 568 responses from a survey of 2001 TAFE students with a university background were analysed.

Golding conducted parallel surveys in 1994 of commencing students at Victorian TAFE institutions with previous university backgrounds, and of commencing students at four Victorian universities with previous TAFE experience at certificate level or above (Golding 1995c). The former consisted of 823 responses. The questions were designed to identify situations and motivational factors influencing the decision to transfer.

Overall, Golding's study found that TAFE students with a university background were most likely to have transferred for the following reasons:

- to gain vocationally specific training (84%)
- to update existing practical skills (68%)
- to develop links with industry (66%)
- to retrain for a new career (50%) (Golding 1995c, p.6)

In relation only to university *graduates* new to TAFE, Golding (1995b, p.4) obtained the following responses:

- studying to gain vocationally specific training (86%)
- retraining to avoid unemployment (38%)
- studying to get a better or higher level job (45%)
- studying at TAFE as a requirement of their job or employer (16%)

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Table 2.5: **TAFE enrolments with a previous university background by field of study, South Australia and Australia, 1992 and 1993**

Field of study	**South Australia**				**Australia**			
	1992		1993		1992		1993	
	N	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
1 Land and marine resources, animal husbandry	283	6.1	332	6.9	2 175	3.9	3 897	5.0
2 Architecture, building	239	5.2	174	3.6	2 871	5.1	3 472	4.5
3 Arts, humanities and social sciences	790	17.2	732	15.3	4 855	8.6	7 250	9.3
4 Business, administration, economics	1 001	21.7	1 049	21.9	18 503	32.9	23 701	30.5
5 Education	0	0.0	0	0.0	2 894	5.2	2 667	3.4
6 Engineering, surveying	529	11.5	606	12.6	7 021	12.5	9 760	12.5
7 Health, community services	248	5.4	266	5.5	4 038	7.2	4 064	5.2
8 Law, legal studies	56	1.2	78	1.6	907	1.6	565	0.7
9 Science	648	14.1	649	13.5	2 942	5.2	5 905	7.6
10 Veterinary science, animal care	4	0.1	7	0.1	62	0.1	104	0.1
11 Services, hospitality, transportation	359	7.8	256	5.3	3 166	5.6	5 725	7.4
12 TAFE multi-field education	447	9.7	647	13.5	6 754	12.0	10 668	13.7
Total	**4 604**	**100.0**	**4 796**	**100.0**	**56 188**	**100.0**	**77 778**	**100.0**

Source: NTCC 1995, pp.41 and 75

Whilst for university non-completers new to TAFE, the following percentages related to reasons for undertaking TAFE study were found:

- doing further study to change direction (61%)
- studying to develop links with industry (72%)

(Golding 1995b, pp.4-5).

In Millican's survey of Queensland TAFE enrollees with a university background, they were asked to indicate up to three reasons for enrolling in TAFE from a list of ten provided in the questionnaire (including 'other'). As for Golding's study, he found that the main reason for enrolling in TAFE was to gain employment-related skills with 60 per cent of responses indicating this reason (see table 2.6). The next most common reasons were 'Refreshing/updating knowledge and skills' (33%), 'Personal interest/development' (31%), and 'Flexibility of attendance' (28%).

'Refreshing/updating knowledge and skills' being the second most common reason for undertaking TAFE studies is not surprising. This is in light of the fact that teachers made up the largest occupational group in Millican's study at 16 per cent, followed by 14 per cent of his respondents being in the managerial occupational category (Millican 1995, p.18). Further, the government or public sector was the sector employing the largest percentage of his respondents at 35%.

In a later study of movement between higher education and TAFE in Victoria, based on 281 survey returns, Golding et al. further explored the vocational motivations for students moving between the sectors. It was found that:

> *Whereas the students entering higher education were on the whole more interested in the qualification than the skills, those entering TAFE from higher education were clearly more interested in gaining new skills than in gaining a qualification* per se. *This reflects both the reality that higher education qualifications are more prestigious overall, and the fact that the older group moving from higher education to TAFE is using education differently.* (Golding et al. 1995, p.11)

Although Millican found that both graduates and non-graduates indicated gaining employment-related skills as being of the most influence to enrol in TAFE, non-graduates were proportionately more likely to do so with 65 per cent indicating this compared with only 54 per cent of graduates. There was also a large difference in the percentages of graduates and non-graduates enrolling in a TAFE course for personal interest reasons, with 35 per cent of graduates indicating this as an influential reason compared with only 26 per cent of non-graduates.

With respect to age, Millican found that the acquisition of employment-related skills was a greater influence for enrolling in TAFE for the younger age groups. In fact, 67 per cent of each of the under 20 and 24 to 29 age groups indicated so, compared with only 60 per cent of the 25 to 29 and over 30 age groups.

Table 2.6: Main factors influencing decision to enrol in TAFE by age and graduate status

Reason	Responses		Age				Graduate status	
			<20	20-24	25-29	30+	Grad.	Non-grad.
	N	%	*N*	*N*	*N*	*N*	*N*	*N*
Gaining employment-related skills	338	60	8	51	45	226	152	186
Refreshing/up-dating knowledge and skills	187	33	3	24	19	138	85	102
Personal interest/development	174	31	3	24	20	120	100	74
Flexibility of attendance	157	28	2	18	20	106	74	83
Developing skills for running own business	95	17	2	7	18	68	47	48
Convenience of location	75	13	1	11	10	51	32	43
Financial benefit	38	7		6	7	25	17	21
Upgrading 'tertiary entrance' rank	32	6	2	7	9	14	3	29
Credit for previous study	20	4		2	4	14	6	14
Other	81	14	1	16	8	52	47	34

Source: Millican 1995, pp.24-25

Through a series of questions, Millican also established respondents' relationship between their TAFE studies and their plans or goals for the next few years. Millican identified each respondent's main goal, these findings being shown in table 2.7. In comparing these findings with those in table 2.6, it can be seen that the most common main goals generally parallel the most common factors indicated in influencing respondents' decisions to enrol in TAFE.

Table 2.7: Respondent goals related to TAFE studies

Goal	Main goals	
	N	%
Improving employment potential/options	114	31
Upgrading qualifications	66	18
Updating skills	38	10
Requirements of job/employer	38	10
Interest/personal development	27	7
Keeping up with technology	27	7
Salary increase or promotion	24	7
Preparation for career change	16	4
Preparation for self-employment	15	4
Total	**365**	**100**

Source: Millican 1995, p.29

Returning to Golding's study, on the basis of students' own perceptions of similarity of fields of study, he found that 55 per cent of those who transferred from university to TAFE disagreed with the statement 'my 1994 field of study is similar to my previous studies', compared with only 25 per cent of respondents who transferred from TAFE to university. Just under two thirds of university to TAFE transferees (62%) reported that they had chosen to do further study to change direction.

In investigating the opportunistic nature of transfer, Golding (1995c) found that 'Almost all (97%) of those transferring from university to TAFE started their university course without intending to come to TAFE' (Golding 1995c, p.8). This suggested to Golding that transfer from university to TAFE was motivated by circumstance, was indicative of inappropriate initial tertiary choices, or due to changed vocational circumstances.

As might be expected, Golding (1995c, p.9) found that university graduates unable to obtain employment, particularly those from a general degree background such as arts, science, education and business, were the most likely to keep studying. As Golding (1995a, p.41) suggests, in a labour market with an oversupply of graduates and a shortage of particular vocational skills,

> *. . . so-called 'reverse' transfer would perhaps be more vocationally useful than 'upward' transfer. The alternative of further postgraduate study for university graduates without a job is also perhaps less attractive and more expensive than an initial vocational credential in TAFE. For many students*

> *the content of the course and the outcomes are more important than the 'levels'.* (Golding 1995a, p.41)

Further weight to labour market influences on those with a university background to enrol in TAFE is given by Golding's findings that:

> *. . . in 1991 at the height of the recession the proportion of university graduates in the cohort articulating to TAFE in Victoria virtually doubled in one year, and has progressively declined in the two years since.* (Golding 1995a, p.43)

Golding's findings are supported on an international scale by those of the OECD, which found in a study of a number of countries that:

> *Overall, the country studies reflect a favourable situation in terms of the employment of NUS [non-university system] graduates. There seems to be general agreement that, in times of job market problems, those with degrees or other qualifications from tertiary institutions outside the university sector often find it easier to get employed than those who graduate from universities.* (OECD 1991, p.60)

It should be borne in mind, however, that this situation varies to a large extent when specific subject areas are investigated, and also has to be qualified with respect to labour market entry levels and differentials in salary.

Millican put forth a reason why university students might be concurrently enrolled in a TAFE course or enroll immediately after completing their university studies, namely, that they are:

> *. . . using TAFE to improve their employment profile or readiness by addressing perceived shortcomings in their university course, or may perceive that their university study is not immediately transferable to employment.* (Millican 1995, p.11)

In relation to those who enrolled in TAFE at least five years since being involved in university studies, Millican suggested that this may have been a reflection of:

> *. . . the highly volatile nature of the job market in recent years, with long-standing employment prospects disappearing, and displaced persons (or those who believe they soon may be) seeking rapid re-[t]raining for new employment-related skills.* (Millican 1995, p.11)

Another often held perception of why those with a university background enter TAFE is that they are university 'drop-outs', failures, or otherwise unable to cope with the university environment. Golding (1995c, p.11) claims that his findings did not support this view. He found that:

> *Student responses indicated that inappropriate choice, often associated with immaturity and uncertainty and motivated by a desire for the status associated with going to university, led many to discontinue and go into whatever work was available at the time.* (Golding 1995c, p.11)

2.5 Other factors related to higher education graduates in TAFE

Golding, in his study of Victorian TAFE commencers with a university background, also sought students' perception of their transfer. He found that:

> *By far the most unattractive aspect of transition to TAFE was the less prestigious nature of the TAFE qualification. Other negatives included the poorer quality of campus life generally and/or campus facilities, lack of challenge and repetition of content previously studied. Reported attractions, in order of priority, included a 'more practical course', 'smaller classes with more personal interaction' and the lower cost of study.*
>
> (Golding 1995c, p.7)

It should be remembered here that Golding's study included those with either a complete or incomplete university background. One may well find a different order of priorities if, say, only those with a complete university background were investigated. For example, those who leave university without completing a qualification may do so because they were not suited to the university teaching style. Thus they may be more attracted to 'smaller classes with more personal interaction' than those who successfully completed a university qualification and who have therefore, to some degree, exhibited their suitability to the university teaching style.

With many higher-level TAFE courses in Victoria comprising up to 20 per cent of students with a university background, Golding (1995c, p.14) identified that there are implications for not only teaching in TAFE, but also teacher training and professional development. These issues arise due to classes having experienced practitioners from a particular vocational field alongside students directly from school. The main problems reported by TAFE students with a university background included repetition, lack of a challenge, as well as difficulties from attending mixed ability group classes with few other mature-age students.

The size of university background cohorts in TAFE and the different needs of this group have been recognised as large enough factors and issues to prompt the NTCC to make the following recommendation:

> *That NTCC recommend to relevant curriculum authorities that TAFE systems consider customising curriculum frameworks to meet the vocational education and training needs of students with university backgrounds.*
>
> (NTCC 1995, Recommendation 4, p.52)

3 General background data on higher education graduates in SA DETE courses

This section provides general background data on higher education graduates that were enrolled in SA DETE modules in 1995. A higher education graduate was taken to be someone who indicated on their TAFE enrolment form that they had completed a diploma or higher qualification. Although higher education graduates were further defined for the purposes of this project as only including those who obtained their qualification from a university, institute of technology, college of advanced education, or teachers' college, this information could only be determined from information provided in the survey.

Thus the background data provided below also include some enrollees who obtained their higher education qualification from TAFE (i.e. their diploma).

Only those enrolled in the vocational courses, streams 2100 to 4500, were analysed. Those enrolled in the recreational or leisure courses, stream 1000, were excluded.

There was a total of 3759 higher education graduates (including those from TAFE) enrolled in TAFE modules in 1995, whilst the total number of enrolments was 4942.

It should be noted that the data provided in the following tables in this chapter are based on enrolments, not students; that is, each enrolment that a student had was counted as a unit or case rather than each individual student.

3.1 Age and gender

The largest and second largest age groupings of enrolments were the 35 to 44 and 25 to 34 age groups respectively containing 31.4 per cent and 28.9 per cent of all enrolments respectively (see table 3.1). Just under a fifth of all enrolments, 19.1 per cent, were in the 45 to 54 age group.

The age distribution of female and male enrolments were very similar, although female enrolments tended to be slightly younger than male enrolments. Overall, females made up 55.5 per cent of the population whilst males made up 44.5 per cent.

Table 3.1: DETE higher education graduate enrolments by age and gender, 1995

Age	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
15 to 19	46	1.7	26	4	72	1.5
20 to 24	441	16.1	252	11.5	693	14.0
25 to 34	807	29.4	621	28.3	1428	28.9
35 to 44	860	31.3	694	31.6	1554	31.4
45 to 54	501	18.3	443	20.2	944	19.1
55 and over	79	2.9	108	4.9	187	3.8
Unknown	11	0.4	53	2.4	64	1.3
Total	**2745**	**100.0**	**2197**	**100.0**	**4942**	**100.0**

Source: SA DETE unpublished data

3.2 Stream

Over half of all enrolments, 55.2 per cent, were in streams 3100 and 3221 with 32.4 per cent and 22.8 per cent respectively (see table 3.2). Streams 3222 and 3500 had the next greatest percentage of enrolments with 12.9 per cent and 11.0 per cent respectively.

There were no major differences in enrolment trends in the various streams with respect to age, although enrolments aged over 44 years were significantly less likely to be enrolled in stream 3221 but more likely to be enrolled in stream 3100, compared with those aged under 45 years.

3.3 Field of study

The most likely field of study for enrolments was 'TAFE Multi-field education' with 34.6 per cent, followed by 'Business administration, economics', 'Engineering, surveying' and 'Art, humanities and social sciences' with 26.6 per cent, 9.0 per cent and 8.3 per cent of enrolments respectively (see table 3.3). The 'TAFE Multi-field education' category consists of courses of various fields of study which are deemed unclassifiable into any one particular field of study. This category being the most popular indicates that higher education graduates are, in general, not targetting specifically classified courses with respect to fields of study.

The 'TAFE Multi-field education' and 'Business administration, economics' fields of study were equally popular for both male and female enrollees. However, traditional areas of gender bias in particular fields of study showed up in a number of other areas including 'Engineering, surveying' with 17.4 per cent of male but only 2.2 per cent of female enrolments; 'Health and community services' with 8.1 per cent of female but only 2.0 per cent of male enrolments; and 'Art, humanities

Table 3.2: DETE higher education graduate enrolments by stream and age, 1995

Stream	Age														Total	
	15 to 19		20 to 24		25 to 34		35 to 44		45 to 54		55 & over		Unknown			
	N	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
2100	0	0.0	15	2.2	64	4.5	80	5.1	50	5.3	12	6.4	2	3.1	223	4.5
2200	0	0.0	4	0.6	38	2.7	28	1.8	11	1.2	3	1.6	0	0.0	84	1.7
3100	21	29.2	177	25.5	461	32.3	504	32.4	360	38.1	66	35.3	12	18.8	1601	32.4
3211	2	2.8	7	1.0	18	1.3	48	3.1	26	2.8	9	4.8	2	3.1	112	2.3
3212	6	8.3	37	5.3	27	1.9	19	1.2	9	1.0	6	3.2	0	0.0	104	2.1
3221	21	29.2	190	27.4	300	21.0	348	22.4	185	19.6	36	19.3	47	73.4	1127	22.8
3222	11	15.3	115	16.6	182	12.7	203	13.1	108	11.4	18	9.6	1	1.6	638	12.9
3300	2	2.8	40	5.8	99	6.9	111	7.1	61	6.5	13	7.0	0	0.0	326	6.6
3400	0	0.0	1	0.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.0
3500	5	6.9	65	9.4	180	12.6	182	11.7	103	10.9	11	5.9	0	0.0	546	11.0
3600	3	4.2	24	3.5	28	2.0	11	0.7	10	1.1	5	2.7	0	0.0	81	1.6
4100	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.1	2	0.1	1	0.1	1	0.5	0	0.0	6	0.1
4200	0	0.0	2	0.3	3	0.2	2	0.1	1	0.1	1	0.5	0	0.0	9	0.2
4300	0	0.0	4	0.6	23	1.6	15	1.0	19	2.0	6	3.2	0	0.0	67	1.4
4500	1	1.4	12	1.7	3	0.2	1	0.1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	17	0.3
Total	**72**	**100.0**	**693**	**100.0**	**1428**	**100.0**	**1554**	**100.0**	**944**	**100.0**	**187**	**100.0**	**64**	**100.0**	**4942**	**100.0**

Source: SA DETE unpublished data

Table 3.3: DETE higher education graduate enrolments by field of study and gender, 1995

Field of study	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Land & Marine Resources, Animal Husbandry	136	5.0	107	4.9	243	4.9
Architecture, Building	65	2.4	101	4.6	166	3.4
Art, Humanities & Social Sciences	294	10.7	115	5.2	409	8.3
Business Administration, Economics	821	29.9	495	22.5	1316	26.6
Education	34	1.2	13	0.6	47	1.0
Engineering, Surveying	61	2.2	382	17.4	443	9.0
Health, Community Services	223	8.1	45	2.0	268	5.4
Law, Legal Studies	24	0.9	30	1.4	54	1.1
Science	12	0.4	19	0.9	31	0.6
Veterinary Science, Animal Care	8	0.3	0	0.0	8	0.2
Services, Hospitality, Transportation	155	5.6	90	4.1	245	5.0
TAFE Multi-field Education	912	33.2	800	36.4	1712	34.6
Total	**2745**	**100.0**	**2197**	**100.0**	**4942**	**100.0**

Source: SA DETE unpublished data

Table 3.4: DETE higher education graduate enrolments by field of study and age, 1995

Field of study	Age														Total	
	15 to 19		20 to 24		25 to 34		35 to 44		45 to 54		55 & over		Unknown			
	N	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Land & Marine Resources, Animal Husbandry	1	1.4	38	5.5	81	5.7	85	5.5	30	3.2	8	4.3	0	0.0	243	4.9
Architecture, Building	4	5.6	23	3.3	53	3.7	60	3.9	22	2.3	4	2.1	0	0.0	166	3.4
Art, Humanities & Social Sciences	9	12.5	62	8.9	101	7.1	127	8.2	82	8.7	26	13.9	2	3.1	409	8.3
Business Administration, Economics	14	19.4	202	29.1	380	26.6	443	28.5	247	26.2	28	15.0	2	3.1	1316	26.6
Education	0	0.0	2	0.3	11	0.8	18	1.2	14	1.5	2	1.1	0	0.0	47	1.0
Engineering, Surveying	5	6.9	66	9.5	110	7.7	113	7.3	73	7.7	31	16.6	45	70.3	443	9.0
Health, Community Services	8	11.1	42	6.1	76	5.3	82	5.3	50	5.3	10	5.3	0	0.0	268	5.4
Law, Legal Studies	0	0.0	17	2.5	25	1.8	7	0.5	4	0.4	1	0.5	0	0.0	54	1.1
Science	0	0.0	4	0.6	9	0.6	11	0.7	7	0.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	31	0.6
Veterinary Science, Animal Care	0	0.0	6	0.9	1	0.1	1	0.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	0.2
Services, Hospitality, Transportation	11	15.3	55	7.9	73	5.1	61	3.9	31	3.3	12	6.4	2	3.1	245	5.0
TAFE Multi-field Education	20	27.8	176	25.4	508	35.6	546	35.1	384	40.7	65	34.8	13	20.3	1712	34.6
Total	**72**	**100.0**	**693**	**100.0**	**1428**	**100.0**	**1554**	**100.0**	**944**	**100.0**	**187**	**100.0**	**64**	**100.0**	**4942**	**100.0**

Source: SA DETE unpublished data

Table 3.5: DETE higher education graduate enrolments by course type and age, 1995

Course type	Age														Total	
	15 to 19		20 to 24		25 to 34		35 to 44		45 to 54		55 & over		Unknown			
	N	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Advanced Certificate	1	1.5	24	3.7	68	4.9	68	4.4	35	3.7	3	1.7	0	0.0	199	4.1
Associate Diploma	4	6.0	40	6.1	122	8.7	128	8.3	75	8.0	9	5.0	0	0.0	378	7.8
Certificate	17	25.4	141	21.5	281	20.1	368	24.0	205	21.9	51	28.2	27	42.2	1090	22.5
Certificate II	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.0
Certificate III	1	1.5	8	1.2	9	0.6	10	0.7	7	0.7	1	0.6	0	0.0	36	0.7
Certificate IV	0	0.0	19	2.9	41	2.9	31	2.0	22	2.4	3	1.7	1	1.6	117	2.4
Certificate of Competency	0	0.0	1	0.2	1	0.1	0	0.0	1	0.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	0.1
Certificate in Voc Ed	4	6.0	13	2.0	11	0.8	10	0.7	2	0.2	2	1.1	0	0.0	42	0.9
Diploma	2	3.0	18	2.7	20	1.4	10	0.7	10	1.1	4	2.2	0	0.0	64	1.3
Advanced Diploma	1	1.5	21	3.2	49	3.5	39	2.5	22	2.4	3	1.7	0	0.0	135	2.8
Diploma	1	1.5	10	1.5	17	1.2	17	1.1	7	0.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	52	1.1
Endorsement	0	0.0	2	0.3	2	0.1	1	0.1	1	0.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	0.1
None (i.e. non-award)	32	47.8	340	51.8	757	54.0	824	53.7	537	57.4	98	54.1	36	56.3	2624	54.2
Advanced Certificate	1	1.5	8	1.2	18	1.3	28	1.8	11	1.2	7	3.9	0	0.0	73	1.5
Traineeship	3	4.5	11	1.7	4	0.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	18	0.4
Certificate (Traineeship)	5	7.5	37	5.6	27	1.9	20	1.3	9	1.0	6	3.3	0	0.0	104	2.1
Total	**67**	**100.0**	**656**	**100.0**	**1401**	**100.0**	**1534**	**100.0**	**935**	**100.0**	**181**	**100.0**	**64**	**100.0**	**4838**	**100.0**

Source: SA DETE unpublished data

and social sciences' with 10.7 per cent of female enrolments but only 5.2 per cent of male enrolments.

Table 3.4 shows field of study by age information. The 'TAFE Multi-field education' and 'Business administration, economics' fields of study were the most popular enrolments for all age groups except the 55 and over age grouping of enrolments where 'Engineering, surveying' was the second most likely field of study. Recoding fields of study as 'Engineering, surveying' and 'Other', differences in enrolments between those aged over 54 and those under 55 were statistically significant (for χ^2-test, p=0.010).

3.4 Course type

Over half of all enrolments, 54.2 per cent, were not enrolled for an award course indicating that many students were studying a module, or mixture of modules, without being enrolled to receive a qualification. Most of the remaining 45.8 per cent of enrolments, which were in award courses, were in certificate courses, 22.5 per cent, or associate diplomas, 7.8 per cent (see table 3.5).

In terms of actual student numbers, there was a total of 3759 higher education graduates enrolled in TAFE studies in 1995 (in streams 2100 to 4500), with 2335 of these having only non-award course enrolments. Thus 62.1 per cent of students had no award course enrolments leaving 37.9 per cent of students who were enrolled in one or more award courses.

No major trends in the type of course enrolment and age were evident.

4 1996 survey of higher education graduates in TAFE

4.1 Methodology of the present study

Postal contact details of all South Australian TAFE students in 1995 who indicated on enrolment that they had previously completed a diploma or higher qualification were obtained via DETE's central database.

Records for a total of 3759 students were provided.

The following survey strategy for dealing with award and non-award course TAFE enrollees was adopted:

- For all surveyees enrolled in one or more award courses, apply the TAFE courses survey instruments (one yellow questionnaire and one *1995 TAFE course questionnaire* instrument for each course enrolled in [see appendix B]), ignoring any non-award enrolments that these surveyees may have (due to difficulty in respondent being able to distinguish between award and non-award enrolments).
- For all surveyees with only non-award course enrolments, apply the TAFE studies survey instruments (one yellow questionnaire and one *1995 TAFE studies questionnaire* [see appendix B]).

The yellow questionnaire form sought general information on the respondent's highest qualification and employment status at enrolment in 1995 TAFE studies. The main questionnaire form (*1995 TAFE course questionnaire* or *1995 TAFE studies questionnaire* forms) sought a range of information with respect to the respondent's TAFE studies or each TAFE course enrolled in. This included reasons for undertaking TAFE studies, similarity of the TAFE field of study to the field of study in their highest qualification, and appropriateness of teaching style and curriculum design in TAFE to the respondent's needs.

The main questionnaire forms also sought at questions eight through ten, information regarding application for credit transfer. This information was collected specifically for the purposes of another SA DETE project which sought information from a cohort of people which included those in the present study.

A pilot survey of 30 enrollees was conducted, 15 to those enrolled only in non-award courses, and 15 to those enrolled in one or more award courses, to identify any required adjustments.

After piloting and making appropriate adjustments, the survey proper was conducted.

The survey instruments were mailed on 25 September 1996 with a covering letter from NCVER (see appendix B) and a reply paid envelope enclosed to assist in responding. Information received was entered into a SPSS® for Windows™ Release 5.0.2 computer database for analysis. A cut-off date for receiving questionnaire returns was set at 5 November 1996 to allow analysis of data from that date.

4.2 Response rates

Of the 3759 student records provided by DETE, 29 had insufficient mail contact address information (of overseas students) thus reducing the number of survey instruments despatched to 3730. During the course of the survey, another survey instrument was despatched to a further person identified as eligible to respond to the survey bringing the total number of surveys despatched to 3731.

As at 5 November 1996, of the total 3731 questionnaires despatched, 1544 returns were received made up of 1215 valid responses, 154 'return to sender', and 175 ineligible responses. Ineligible responses were classified as such due to the respondent claiming not to be a higher education graduate (including, for the purposes of this project, those holding a TAFE diploma as their highest qualification), or claiming never to have been enrolled in a TAFE course in 1995 or having no recollection of being so.

Thus a raw response rate of 32.6 per cent was achieved. Using an estimate of incorrect addresses as the proportion of all returns that were 'return to sender', and the proportion of ineligible surveyees as an estimate of the proportion of surveys despatched to ineligible persons, the adjusted 'real' response rate was calculated as 41.4 per cent.

4.3 Survey findings

This section provides an analysis of data obtained from the survey, both quantitative and qualitative. Statistical results and analysis of same for each question from the questionnaire are discussed and complemented with relevant qualitative analysis of students' comments.

It should be noted that the percentages provided are based only on valid responses to relevant questions, except where otherwise stated.

Further, the data provided refer, unless otherwise stated, to enrolments rather than students. For the purposes of the following analysis, 'enrolments' are defined as follows. Where a student is enrolled in non-award courses only, then this student is counted as one enrolment. Where a student is enrolled in one or more award courses, then each enrolment in an award course is counted as an enrolment, with enrolments in non-award courses by these students being ignored.

4.3.1 Data quality

As stated in section 4.2, a number of surveyees claimed that they were never enrolled in or undertook a TAFE course during 1995, or did not hold a higher education qualification.

Regarding the former, although a number of surveyees had in fact undertaken TAFE studies (as discussed below), others still swore 'black and blue' that they had not. Although reasonable doubt is therefore placed on the quality of DETE data, doubt, at least partially, also resides with surveyees' recollection abilities. However, of those who swore that they had not undertaken any TAFE studies, some indicated that they had *applied* to undertake 1995 studies but never actually *enrolled*.

One such case resulted in a TAFE institute staff member reporting that they put *applicants'* details on the system 'to make it easier for when they do *enrol* [my italics]'. This suggests that data quality controls should be checked to ensure that only those applicants for courses that do actually enrol in a course or module are counted as TAFE enrollees.

Another case, for whom DETE records had enrolled in a 'Mechanical Engineering Studies (General access course)', claimed absolutely no involvement with TAFE whatsoever in his lifetime, apart from membership of a TAFE institute library. One can only hope that some surveyees are forgetful, rather than the possibility of library membership records becoming confused with those of enrolments!

Regarding surveyees' higher education graduate status, this data was given to DETE by enrollees at enrolment. However, there were a number of cases of DETE records claiming surveyees to have completed a higher education qualification, but these surveyees claiming at the time of the survey that they held no post-secondary qualifications or had only partially completed a higher education qualification. This indicates that incorrect data on higher education graduate status is sometimes given to DETE at enrolment and this data has therefore to be treated with caution.

Finally, date of birth data supplied by DETE indicated that at least 20 of the students were under the age of two years in 1995, the majority of these yet to be born in the year 2001 (table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Suspicious years of birth from supplied DETE data file

Year of birth	N
1994	1
1995	5
2000	3
2001	11

Care thus needs to be exercised in the use of age-related data.

4.3.2 Respondents' general comments

Many respondents took the opportunity to provide comments on their TAFE studies relevant to the needs of higher education graduates (section F of the yellow questionnaire) in relation to many areas including teaching styles, recognition of prior learning, appropriateness of their TAFE studies, and TAFE's facilities and services. Comments on these specific areas will be included in the relevant sections following.

Apart from these specific comments, some general comments were aired regarding the purpose of the survey and the general needs of higher education graduates in TAFE, and are here provided.

As was explained in the covering letter to surveyees, the information gained from the survey is to 'be used to help make improvements to TAFE courses for the needs of higher education graduates'. One student in particular, a holder of a Master's degree, thought this to be inappropriate:

> *I believe that your efforts should first be directed to improving TAFE for students who do not have other qualifications. If graduates wish to do TAFE courses they should be treated as if they were there as the 'privileged'—they already have qualifications whereas most TAFE students are there for 'real' long term needs.*

In a similar vein, another student wrote:

> *My main concern with the TAFE system is my personal experience of being selected above someone who did not hold a higher education qualification. Although I was certainly very keen to undertake the course, I thought that it would have been important to give opportunities to those who have not had the chance to undertake further education courses.*

A small number of others mentioned that as higher education graduates were in the minority, the main thrust of TAFE should remain as assisting the majority consisting of school leavers and the unemployed. With this in view, these graduates expected to have to work around teaching styles and the like which were not directly suitable to themselves.

By contrast, others indicated that TAFE was indeed catering only to the needs of 'those who need it most', somewhat to the exclusion of those with a higher education or already in employment:

> *As a part-time, after hours student, my needs were dismissed in preference to 'getting those kids, who need it, into the workforce'. The attitude was being already employed, I was getting in the way!*

Two students highlighted the incidence of people in the general community thinking it strange for a higher education graduate to undertake training at TAFE:

> *I have to say that I was quite surprised to get the letter and questionnaire. Why is it the assumption that anyone who has a degree does not need any further education/training? My own employer made the same assumption until the last few years. Apart from personal interest/goals, there are many practical workplace skills new graduates could do with, particularly those who went straight from school to university.*

and

> *Most teachers and students would be shocked to think that a person with a degree would bother with TAFE as most are going from TAFE to university. This left me feeling uncomfortable at times.*

At least for some, the élitism of universities and their education being considered far superior to that provided by TAFE was abolished:

> *. . . my educational snobbery about universities being superior to vocational institutions is long gone.*

> *The standard of teaching and the course curriculum I found to be of high quality—far beyond my 'elitist-university-graduate' ideas!*

and

> *TAFE exceeded my expectations. My previous notion that TAFE was really only for young school drop-outs was quickly exposed as a bad misconception.*

However, many still rated their higher education experience as superior to their TAFE experiences:

> *The course undertaken was of a far inferior level than my two previous university degrees.*

4.3.3 Background information

Awareness of TAFE studies

As stated in section 4.2, a number of surveyees claimed that they were never enrolled in or undertook a TAFE course during 1995. A number of telephone inquiries were received regarding this matter. However, on further investigation, the majority of telephone enquirers were enlightened to the fact they had indeed undertaken TAFE studies in 1995. This confusion occurred mainly for those who had undertaken a short half to two-day course.

Examples include the 'Director Approved Transport Engineering Studies' course which was a half-day driver training course, some 'train the trainer' courses, and a number of 'Director Approved Business Studies' courses which were arranged by an employer and delivered in the surveyee's workplace.

These examples point to the need for TAFE to change its marketing and advertising of courses, particularly to those actually undertaking them, if it wishes to raise its profile in the training market and make the community at large fully aware of the degree to which TAFE plays a role in training.

Prior TAFE studies

Of those who indicated at question D whether or not their 1995 TAFE studies were their first TAFE studies since completing their highest qualification or not, 64.3 per cent (698) indicated that they were, leaving 35.7 per cent (387) who indicated that they were not.

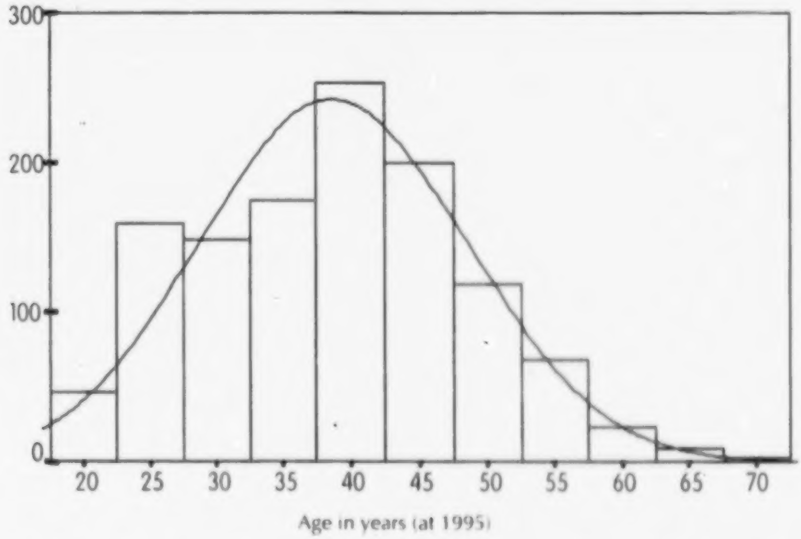
Gender

Of the valid survey returns, 60.5 per cent (732) were from females and 39.5 per cent (478) from males. Comparing these figures with the percentage of females and males to which the survey instruments were despatched, namely, 55.7 per cent and 44.3 per cent respectively, indications are that females were more likely to respond to the survey than males.

Age

Figure 4.1 below depicts the histogram and normal curve for respondents' ages. The mean age was 38.6 years and the median and mode both 39 years. A test of normality found the age distribution not to be normal (for Kolmogorov-Smirnov [Lilliefors] test, p=0.000); however, it can be observed that the departure from normality was not great. The sample mean and median ages are somewhat larger compared with the survey population mean and median ages of 36.4 and 36 years respectively, indicating that older surveyees were more likely to respond to the survey.

Figure 4.1: Age at time of 1995 TAFE studies



The distribution of ages of those who indicated that their 1995 TAFE studies were their first TAFE studies since completing their highest qualification was virtually identical to that for the whole sample, with the exception that the mean, median and mode were all one year less.

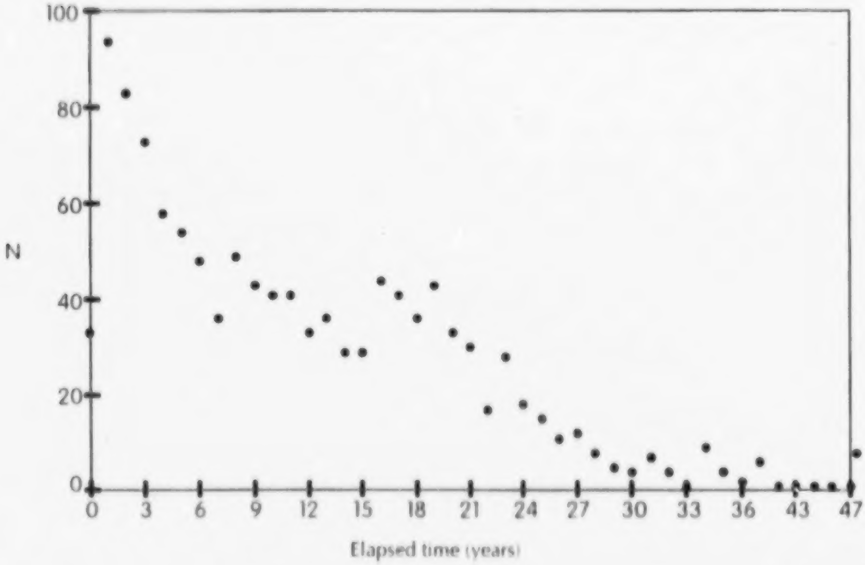
The higher education cohort of TAFE students is thus very much a mature-age cohort, comprising a group of people who would have many life and work experiences behind. This cohort also does not have a large proportion of students who have more or less continuously travelled straight through the school-higher education-TAFE pathway without a number of years break somewhere along the way.

The wide spread of ages indicates that many higher education graduates view TAFE as providing learning opportunities over the length of their working lifetime.

Time elapsed between higher qualification and 1995 TAFE studies

Respondents were asked to indicate in which year they completed their highest qualification. Figure 4.2 below shows the distribution of the number of years between completing the highest qualification and undertaking 1995 TAFE studies. The mean number of years was 11.4, whilst the median and mode were ten and one year respectively.

Figure 4.2: Time elapsed between higher qualification and 1995 TAFE studies



Just under a quarter of respondents, 24.3 per cent, undertook their 1995 TAFE studies less than five years after completing their highest qualification, whilst 49.1 per cent of the sample did so in less than ten years. Around a quarter, 25.6 per cent, undertook their 1995 studies more than 17 years since their highest qualification, leaving 25.3 per cent who undertook their 1995 studies ten to 17 years after their highest qualification.

As would be expected, for those for whom their 1995 TAFE studies were their first TAFE studies since completing their highest qualification, the mean and median of elapsed years were less at 10.0 and eight years respectively, although the trend displayed in figure 4.2 was virtually the same for this group.

The above figures are, of course, skewed by the age variable. Many of those who were undertaking their TAFE studies within five years of their higher education qualification may undertake further TAFE studies 20 years after completing their highest qualification when they have aged enough for this possibility to occur.

Another skewing factor to take note of is the earlier stated fact that the mean age of the survey sample is somewhat older than for the survey population at 38.6 and 36.4 years respectively. Thus the above distribution in figure 4.2 is likely to be skewed to the right compared with the true population distribution.

Nevertheless, the above findings do illustrate that significant proportions of higher education graduates in TAFE are there up to and over 20 years after having gained their highest qualification. Thus TAFE training is not always seen by higher education graduates just as a 'top-up' to a recently completed higher education qualification.

Highest qualification

A degree, with or without honours, was the most commonly held highest qualification prior to undertaking TAFE studies in 1995, being held by 44.5 per cent of the sample (table 4.2). A graduate diploma, which was held by 22.2 per cent of the sample, was the next most commonly held highest qualification. A postgraduate bachelor degree, masters degree or doctorate was the highest qualification for 12.4 per cent of the sample. Thus at least 79 per cent of respondents held a degree.

Just under a fifth of the sample had an undergraduate diploma as their highest qualification. The 17 respondents making up the 'other' category at 1.4 per cent consisted mainly of those who held graduate certificates or hospital-based diploma equivalent qualifications.

A significantly greater percentage of females than males, 22.5 per cent compared with 15.1 per cent respectively, held an undergraduate diploma whilst a greater percentage of males held a qualification of a degree or higher than females (for χ^2-test, p=0.000).

Table 4.2: Students' highest qualification levels by gender

Qualification	Female		Male		Total*	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Undergraduate diploma	163	22.5	71	15.1	234	19.5
Degree	298	41.1	231	49.1	533	44.5
Graduate diploma	168	23.2	98	20.9	266	22.2
Post-grad. bachelor degree	61	8.4	35	7.4	96	8.0
Masters degree	20	2.8	15	3.2	35	2.9
Doctorate	4	0.6	14	3.0	18	1.5
Other	11	1.5	6	1.3	17	1.4
Total	**725**	**100.0**	**470**	**100.0**	**1199**	**100.0**

* Greater than sum of female and male due to missing sex data of some respondents.

Institution type from whence highest qualification obtained

As would be expected, over half of the sample, 54.0 per cent, indicated that they obtained their highest qualification from a university, the next most indicated institution being a college of advanced education at 23.1 per cent (table 4.3). Institutes of technology and teachers' colleges were indicated by 8.6 per cent and 6.6 per cent of respondents respectively. The 'other' category consisted mainly of those who obtained their highest qualification from hospital-based courses or overseas institutions such as a polytechnic.

The 17 respondents making up the 'other' at 1.4 per cent consisted mainly of those who held graduate certificates or hospital-based diploma equivalent qualifications.

Table 4.3: Institution type whence highest qualification obtained

Institution type	Female		Male		Total*	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
University	370	51.0	274	58.2	648	54.0
Institute of technology	39	5.4	64	13.6	103	8.6
CAE	192	26.5	85	18.0	277	23.1
Teachers' college	63	8.7	16	3.4	79	6.6
Other	61	8.4	32	6.8	93	7.8
Total	**725**	**100.0**	**471**	**100.0**	**1200**	**100.0**

* Greater than sum of female and male due to missing sex data of some respondents.

For many, if not most, the indication of an institute of technology, college of advanced education, or teachers' college related to the status of their institution at the time of receiving the highest qualification. Most of these institutions would now have been reclassified as part of a university system.

As would be expected from the level of females' and males' highest qualifications, females were less likely to have obtained their highest qualification from a university or institute of technology than males, but more likely to have received it from a college of advanced education or teachers' college (for χ^2-test, p=0.000).

Employment status on enrolment

Just over half of respondents, 52.0 per cent, were in full-time employment, and 25.6 per cent in part-time employment, at the time of enrolling in their 1995 TAFE studies (table 4.3). Unemployment was the case for 12.8 per cent and 9.7 per cent were not in the labour force.

As can be seen in table 4.4, labour force status at the time of enrolling in 1995 TAFE studies differed significantly between the sexes (for χ^2-test, p=0.000). A substantially greater percentage of males, 69.9 per cent, were in full-time employment compared to only 40.3 per cent of females whilst a much greater percentage of females were in part-time employment, 36.6 per cent, compared to only 8.9 per cent of males.

The percentage of females not in the labour force being 12 per cent, was twice that for males. Unemployment rates for the female and male samples were 12.7 per cent and 16.3 per cent respectively.

As would be expected, those not in the labour force had the greatest mean age, 42.6 years, which was significantly different to the mean age in each of the other categories (table 4.4).

Table 4.4: Labour force status at enrolment by sex

Labour force status	Female		Male		Total[*]		Mean age[a]
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Full-time employed	292	40.3	329	69.9	624	52.0	38.2
Part-time employed	265	36.6	42	8.9	307	25.6	38.5
Unemployed	81	11.2	72	15.3	153	12.8	37.5
Not in labour force	87	12.0	28	5.9	116	9.7	42.6
Total	**725**	**100.0**	**471**	**100.0**	**1200**	**100.0**	**38.6**

[*] Greater than sum of female and male due to missing sex data of some respondents.

[a] 'Not in labour force' mean significantly different to all other means (Scheffe 5% level).

TAFE 1995 course type and stream

Table 4.5 below shows the percentages of females and males in the various course types/levels, using course type codes as used by SA DETE.

Overall, 44.9 per cent of 'enrolments' were in non-award courses only (see the beginning of section 4.3 for the definition of 'enrolments' for the purposes of this project), this category making up the greatest percentage of enrolments. The three next largest categories in descending order were certificates (C), associate diplomas, and advanced certificates (AC) at 25.9 per cent, 9.6 per cent and 5.5 per cent respectively.

Significant differences in course type were found between the sexes (for χ^2-test, p=0.000). The most significant differences were that a greater percentage of female enrolments, 30.4 per cent, were in certificate (C) courses compared to only 19.0 per cent of male enrolments. On the other hand, male enrolments were made up of 51.2 per cent in non-award enrolments compared with only 40.9 per cent of female enrolments.

This finding may be linked to statistically significant differences found between award and non-award course enrolments with respect to labour force status (for χ^2-test, p=0.000) as shown in table 4.6. Those enrolments in full-time or part-time employment were more likely to be in non-award courses, 55.0 per cent and 39.3 per cent respectively, compared with only 30.0 per cent and 25.4 per cent of unemployed enrolments and those not in the labour force respectively.

Table 4.5: Course type by sex (enrolments)

Course type	DETE Code	Female N	Female %	Male N	Male %	Total N	Total %
Diploma	D	16	2.1	4	0.8	20	1.6
Diploma	DP	16	2.1	2	0.4	18	1.4
Advanced diploma	DA	25	3.3	11	2.2	36	2.9
Associate diploma	AD	57	7.5	62	12.7	119	9.6
Advanced certificate	AC	50	6.6	19	3.9	69	5.5
Certificate	C	230	30.4	93	19.0	323	25.9
Certificate III	C3	6	0.8	1	0.2	7	0.6
Certificate IV	C4	29	3.8	10	2.0	39	3.1
Endorsement	E	1	0.1	0	0.0	1	0.1
Cert. of vocational ed.	CV	5	0.7	7	1.4	12	1.0
Non-award	N	309	40.9	251	51.2	560	44.9
Advanced certificate	PT	2	0.3	18	3.7	20	1.6
Traineeship	T	3	0.4	2	0.4	5	0.4
Certificate	TC	7	0.9	10	2.0	17	1.4
Total		**756**	**100.0**	**490**	**100.0**	**1246**	**100.0**

Table 4.6: Enrolments—Labour force status by course type

Course type	Labour force status									
	Full-time employed		Part-time employed		Unemployed		Not in labour force		Total	
	N	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Non-award	348	55.0	126	39.3	48	30.0	31	25.4	553	44.7
Award	285	45.0	195	60.7	112	70.0	91	74.6	683	55.3
Total	**633**	**100.0**	**321**	**100.0**	**160**	**100.0**	**122**	**100.0**	**1 236**	**100.0**

Regarding stream, over a third of enrolments, 34.4 per cent, were in stream 3100 (initial vocational courses) whilst most of the remainder where divided amongst streams 3221 (courses which grant partial exemption to other skills courses) 15.1 per cent, 3222 (complete other skills courses) 14.8 per cent, and 3500 (para-professional/higher technician) 13.4 per cent (table 4.7). Percentages of male and female enrolments followed similar trends, although differences in gender proportions enrolled in stream 3100 courses or other, and stream 3222 courses or other, were statistically significant (for χ^2-test, p=0.000 and for χ^2-test, p=0.008 respectively).

Table 4.7: Course stream by sex (enrolments)

Course stream	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
2100	12	1.6	14	2.9	26	2.1
2200	29	3.8	3	0.6	32	2.6
3100	230	30.4	199	40.6	429	34.4
3211	37	4.9	8	1.6	45	3.6
3212	7	0.9	10	2.0	17	1.4
3221	116	15.3	72	14.7	188	15.1
3222	128	16.9	56	11.4	184	14.8
3300	70	9.3	41	8.4	111	8.9
3500	95	12.6	72	14.7	167	13.4
3600	18	2.4	7	1.4	25	2.0
4200	1	0.1	0	0.0	1	0.1
4300	13	1.7	7	1.4	20	1.6
4500	0	0.0	1	0.2	1	0.1
Total	**756**	**100.0**	**490**	**100.0**	**1246**	**100.0**

Fields of study

The most likely field of study for enrolments was 'TAFE Multi-field education' with 33.6 per cent, followed by 'Business administration, economics' and 'Art, humanities and social sciences' with 25.9 per cent and 10.7 per cent of enrolments respectively (see table 4.8). 'Engineering, surveying' and 'Land and marine resources, animal husbandry' had 6.4 per cent of enrolments each.

Gender bias was found in a number of fields of study, particularly 'Engineering, surveying' with 14.5 per cent of male but only 1.2 per cent of female enrolments; 'Art, humanities and social sciences' with 14.0 per cent of female enrolments but only 5.5 per cent of male enrolments; and 'Health and community services' with 7.7 per cent of female but only 3.5 per cent of male enrolments. These distributions are consistent with the figures for all SA DETE enrolments in 1995 (see table 3.3).

Regarding the only two award courses for which 35 or valid responses were received, namely, the Associate Diploma of Information Systems and the Certificate in Women's Studies, significant differences were found in relation to sex. For the Associate Diploma of Information Systems, males were significantly more likely than females to be in this course (for χ^2-test, $p=0.000$). As would be expected, females were significantly more likely than males to be in the Certificate in Women's Studies course which comprised of one male and 35 females.

Table 4.8: Enrolments—field of study by sex

Field of study		Female		Male		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Land and marine resources, animal husbandry	51	6.7	29	5.9	80	6.4
2	Architecture, building	19	2.5	24	4.9	43	3.5
3	Arts, humanities and social sciences	106	14.0	27	5.5	133	10.7
4	Business, administration, economics	213	28.2	110	22.4	323	25.9
5	Education	14	1.9	5	1.0	19	1.5
6	Engineering, surveying	9	1.2	71	14.5	80	6.4
7	Health, community services	58	7.7	17	3.5	75	6.0
8	Law, legal studies	7	0.9	2	0.4	9	0.7
9	Science	2	0.3	4	0.8	6	0.5
10	Veterinary science, animal care	1	0.1	0	0.0	1	0.1
11	Services, hospitality, transportation	39	5.2	19	3.9	58	4.7
12	TAFE multi-field education	237	31.3	182	37.1	419	33.6
Total		**756**	**100.0**	**490**	**100.0**	**1246**	**100.0**

Respondents were asked at question two to indicate how similar the field of study in their highest qualification was to that for each of their TAFE 1995 courses (or for their 1995 TAFE studies generally if enrolled only in non-award modules/courses).

For over half of enrolments, 56.5 per cent, it was indicated that the fields of study between TAFE studies and the highest qualification were not at all similar (table 4.9). For a further 24.2 per cent of enrolments, it was indicated that the fields of study were only of little similarity. Fields of study were considered very similar or similar for only just under a fifth, 19.2 per cent, of enrolments.

Significant differences were found between female and male enrolments with regard to the similarity of fields of study between TAFE studies and highest qualification (for Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, p=0.000). Male TAFE enrolments were significantly more likely to be of a 'very similar' or 'similar' field of study with just over a quarter, 26.8 per cent being so, compared with only 14.6 per cent of female enrolments (table 4.9). On the other hand, a greater percentage of female than male enrolments, 85.5 per cent compared with 73.2 per cent respectively, were in fields of study of little or no similarity.

Significant differences were found between female and male enrolments with regard to the similarity of fields of study between TAFE studies and highest qualification (for Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, p=0.000). Male TAFE enrolments were significantly more likely to be of a 'very similar' or 'similar' field of study with just over a quarter, 26.8 per cent being so, compared with only 14.6 per cent of female enrolments (table 4.9). On the other hand, a greater percentage of female than male enrolments, 85.5 per

cent compared with 73.2 per cent respectively, were in fields of study of little or no similarity.

Table 4.9: Enrolments—similarity of fields of study

Similarity	Female		Male		Total*	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Very similar	35	4.7	42	8.7	76	6.1
Similar	74	9.9	88	18.1	162	13.1
Little similarity	166	22.2	132	27.2	300	24.2
Not at all similar	474	63.3	223	46.0	700	56.5
Total	**749**	**100.0**	**485**	**100.0**	**1238**	**100.0**

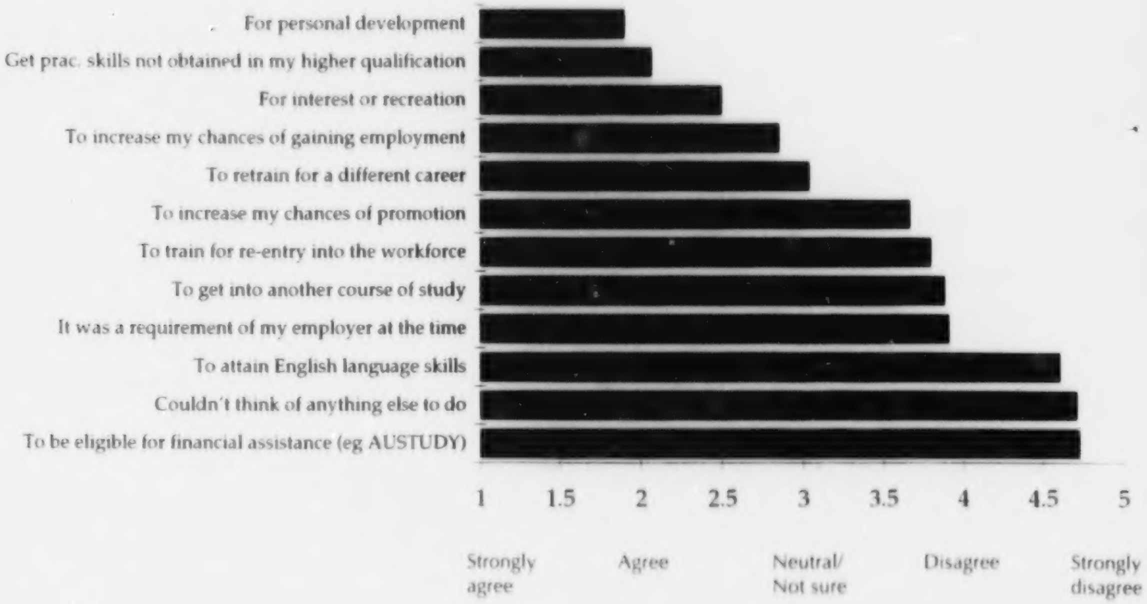
* Greater than sum of female and male due to missing sex data of some respondents.

No major trends were found in a cross-tabulation of field similarity and labour force status.

4.3.2 Reasons for undertaking TAFE studies in 1995

Question three asked respondents to indicate on a scale from one to five, how much they agreed or disagreed with various listed reasons for undertaking their 1995 TAFE studies. Figure 4.3 shows the means of respondents' indications, whilst figure 4.4 shows the percentage of responses to each of 'strongly agree' through 'strongly disagree'.

Figure 4.3: Reasons for undertaking 1995 TAFE studies—enrolments mean responses



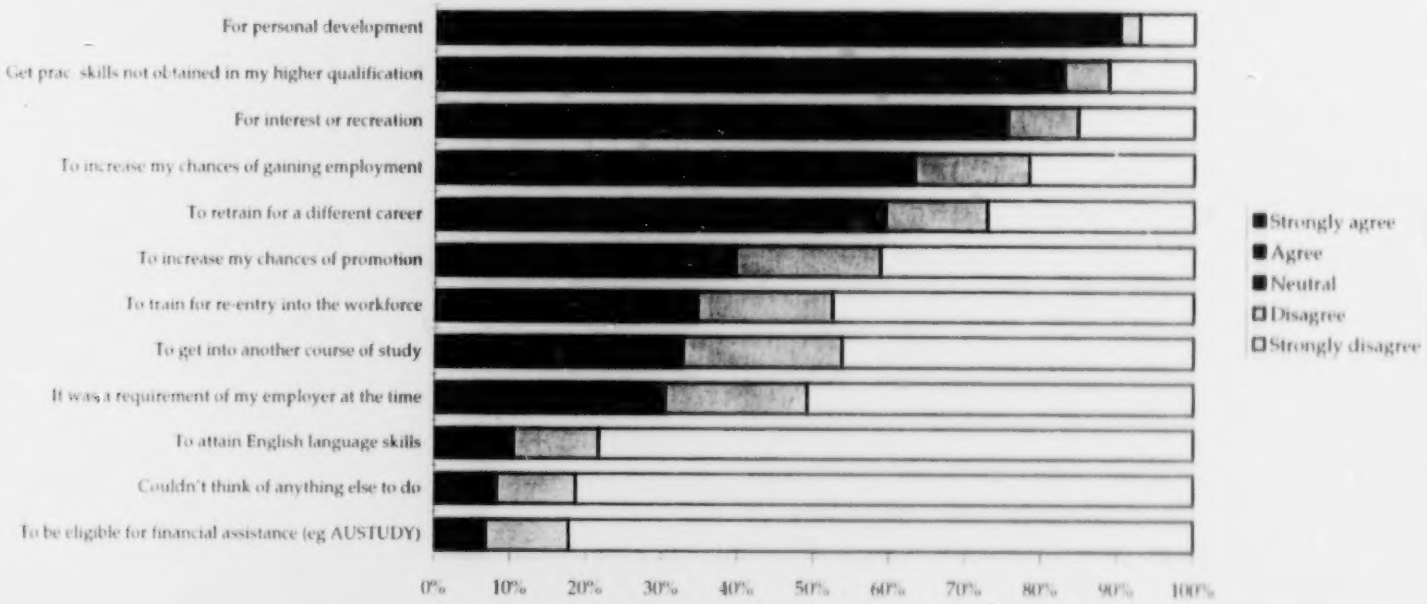


Figure 4.4: **Reasons for undertaking 1995 TAFE studies—percentage of enrolments for each option**

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Clearly, the most likely reason for higher education graduates to undertake TAFE studies was for personal development, with 46.8 per cent and 38.1 per cent of enrolments being in the 'strongly agree' or 'agree' categories respectively for this reason. Nearly as popular was the reason 'to gain practical skills not obtained in my higher qualification' with 45.5 per cent and 31.4 per cent of enrolments falling in the 'strongly agree' and 'agree' categories respectively. 'For interest or recreation' was the third most likely reason with 28.4 per cent and 34.1 per cent of enrolments being in the 'strongly agree' and 'agree' categories respectively.

For half of enrolments, increasing the chances of gaining employment was a strongly agreed to or agreed to reason whilst for 43.8 per cent of enrolments, retraining for a different career was a strongly agreed to or agreed to reason.

For each of the reasons 'to increase my chances of promotion', 'to train for re-entry into the workforce', 'it was a requirement of my employer at the time' and 'to get into another course of study', between 19 per cent and 27 per cent of enrolments were in the 'strongly agree' or 'agree' categories.

Many respondents elaborated on their reasons for undertaking TAFE studies at part F, the general comments section, of the yellow questionnaire. Here, the acquisition of practical skills was mentioned a number of times by respondents, as the following extracts illustrate:

> *TAFE courses provided practical skills training in techniques (e.g. agricultural chemicals) not covered by higher education but required by government regulations (i.e. occupational health and safety).*
>
> *As a higher education graduate, the main attraction of a TAFE course would be to gain 'hands on' skills which underpin my existing theoretical base.*
>
> *Being a visual artist, I found I needed to pick up on the technical skills that were lacking within the university degree. TAFE was and is excellent for doing this.*

Thus TAFE is necessary for many to acquire practical skills not provided in the higher education sector, even some essential practical skills required to conform to government regulations. Some respondents specifically mentioned the necessity of attending TAFE in order to gain practical skills required to gain employment:

> *I am studying at TAFE to gain practical skills for the workforce which I didn't gain at university.*
>
> *As university did not provide sufficient skills to gain employment [BA(Hons)], the skills I acquired at TAFE did help me secure ongoing employment.*

Cost considerations were also given as a reason for undertaking TAFE studies rather than further higher education studies:

> *I would like to do more at university but the current HECS fees system doesn't allow this due to cost whereas TAFE is affordable.*

> *I chose a TAFE course over further university studies due to cost considerations . . .*

Although only 2.8 per cent (31) of enrolments were in the 'strongly agree' or 'agree' categories with respect to the 'to be eligible for financial assistance (e.g. AUSTUDY)' reason, one rural student made the comment 'I was not there to get AUSTUDY like most of them'. This suggests the possibility that, particularly in rural areas with higher unemployment rates, more students than are admitting may be undertaking TAFE courses with the strong motive to access AUSTUDY funding. However, the comment made here probably related to rural TAFE students generally, rather than higher education graduates specifically.

Related to reasons for undertaking TAFE studies is whether or not credit was received towards these studies due to prior studies. Respondents indicated at question eleven, whether or not they received credit towards each TAFE enrolment and, if so, further asked if they would still have enrolled if not granted credit.

Only 170 enrolments were indicated as having received credit from prior studies with most other respondents indicating at other questions that they thought this information to be irrelevant due to the field of study of their TAFE enrolment being substantially different to those for prior studies.

Of the 161 enrolments where credit had been received and information provided as to whether or not the enrolment would still have taken place if credit was not granted, 80.1 per cent (129) indicated that they would have still enrolled if not granted credit leaving 19.9 per cent (32) who would not have.

The granting of credit in TAFE courses for prior studies undertaken would thus appear to be an important factor for only a small minority of higher education graduates contemplating TAFE studies.

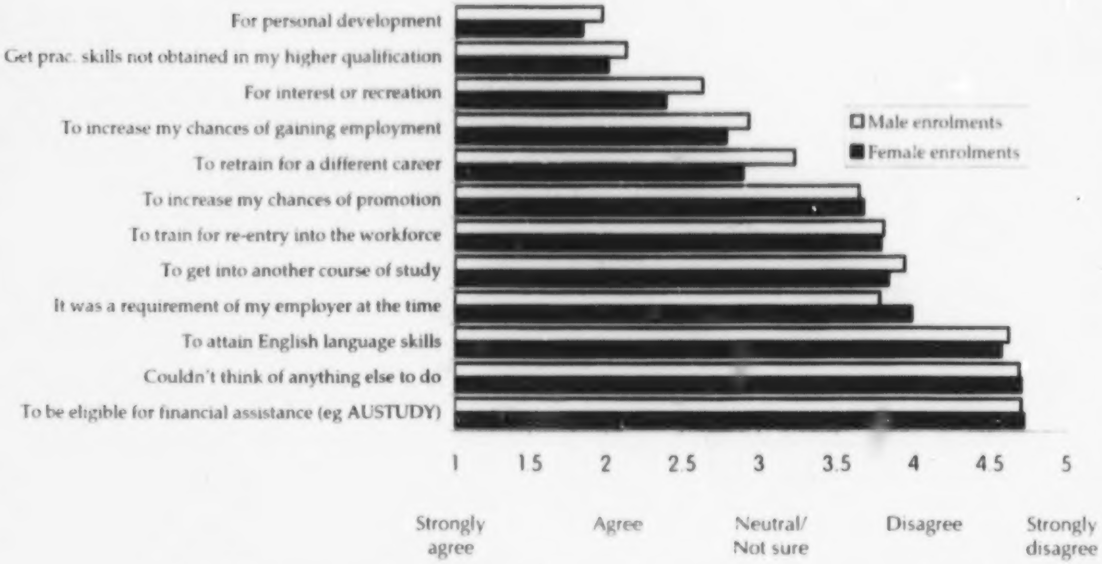
4.3.3 Analysis of reasons by other factors

Reason by gender

As can be seen from figure 4.5, which shows the means of levels of agreement with various reasons for undertaking TAFE studies by sex, there were no large differences between the sexes. However, t-tests revealed statistically significant differences between means for the 'for interest or recreation', 'to retrain for a different career', and 'to increase my chances of gaining employment' reasons.

Female enrolments were found to be significantly more likely than males to agree with the 'for interest or recreation' reason with response means of 2.39 and 2.63 respectively (for t-test, p=0.003). Here, 66.7 per cent of female enrolments were in the 'strongly agree' or 'agree' categories compared with only 56.3 per cent of male enrolments. Even when considering only enrolments in the labour force, females were still found to be significantly more likely than males to agree with this reason (for t-test, p=0.003). Thus being in or out of the labour force does not appear to be a major underlying explanation for this difference.

Figure 4.5: Reasons—male and female enrolment comparisons



With respect to the 'to retrain for a different career' reason, male and female enrolments had response means of 3.23 and 2.90 respectively (for t-test, p=0.000). Here, 47.6 per cent of female enrolments were in the 'strongly agree' or 'agree' categories compared with only 37.9 per cent of male enrolments.

Male enrolments were significantly more likely than females to agree to the 'it was a requirement of my employer at the time' reason with means of 3.78 and 3.99 respectively (for t-test, p=0.012). Even when only those enrolments that were employed were considered, males were still found to be significantly more likely to agree to this reason than females (for t-test, p=0.010), thus being employed or otherwise appears not to explain the differences in agreement to this reason between the sexes.

Reason by age

In general, no strong trends or large differences were found in relation to age and level of agreement with the various reasons for undertaking TAFE studies. The magnitudes of all the correlation coefficients were under 0.15, except for two reasons, namely, the 'to increase my chances of promotion in current employment' and 'to increase my chances of gaining employment' reasons.

For the 'to increase my chances of promotion in current employment' reason, r=0.1693 (p=0.000). Here, 53.4 per cent of those aged under 39 years (the mean of ages in 1995) strongly agreed or agreed to this reason compared with 66.9 per cent of those aged over 38.

For the 'to increase my chances of gaining employment' reason, r=0.1589 (p=0.000). Here, of those aged under 39, 31.0 per cent strongly agreed or agreed to the reason 'to increase my chances of gaining employment' compared with 42.9 per cent of those aged over 38.

Possible explanations for these findings may be that the older higher education graduate students in TAFE have already been in the workforce for some time since graduating and are using TAFE to update their skills or acquire skills not obtained in their higher education in order that they may have a better chance of promotion.

It is not clear why older graduates were more likely to be undertaking TAFE studies to gain employment as no significant difference in proportions unemployed or otherwise were found between those aged under 39 and those aged over 38.

Reason by labour force status

Analysis of variance with Scheffe tests (at the 5% level) were conducted between the labour force status groups on the means of agreement levels for each reason. Treating the agreement scale as a continuous scale was chosen for the purposes of conducting the analysis of variance with Scheffe tests as this was considered more appropriate and rigorous than using weaker chi square tests. Hence the reason for table 4.10 below which shows the mean of the agreement scale for each labour force status group, for each reason.

Regarding the two most popular reasons for undertaking TAFE studies, 'for personal development' and 'to gain practical skills not obtained in my higher qualification', no significant differences were found between the labour force status categories.

Table 4.10: Reason by labour force status—means of agreement scale responses

Reason	**Labour force status**			
	Full-time employed	Part-time employed	Unemployed	Not in labour force
For personal development	1.94	1.76	2.12	1.74
Get prac. skills not obtained in my higher qualification	2.10	2.00	2.09	2.04
For interest or recreation	2.59	2.28	2.77	2.12
To retrain for a different career	3.34	2.86	2.45	2.76
To increase my chances of gaining employment	3.37	2.59	1.48	2.84
To increase my chances of promotion	3.46	3.63	4.11	4.36
It was a requirement of my employer at the time	3.66	4.05	4.21	4.55
To get into another course of study	4.09	3.77	3.42	3.73
To train for re-entry into the workforce	4.32	3.86	2.37	2.96
To attain English language skills	4.71	4.62	4.21	4.51
Couldn't think of anything else to do	4.79	4.71	4.56	4.48
To be eligible for financial assistance (e.g. AUSTUDY)	4.82	4.69	4.54	4.49

With respect to the third most popular reason, 'for interest or recreation', those in part-time employment and those not in the labour force were each significantly more likely to agree to this reason than those in full-time employment or the unemployed.

Those in full-time employment were significantly less likely to agree with the reason 'to retrain for a different career' than those in each other labour force status category.

The only significant differences found in relation to the 'to retrain for a different career' reason was that the full-time employed were significantly less likely to agree to this reason compared to each other labour force status category.

With respect to the 'to attain English language skills' reason, the only significant differences found were that the unemployed were significantly more likely to agree with this reason compared to the full and part-time employed. This finding may reflect the higher unemployment rate of those from non-English-speaking backgrounds. It nevertheless points out that despite holding a higher education qualification, a number of higher education graduates feel the need to improve their English language skills to make themselves more competitive in the labour market.

Due to the nature of some of the options for reasons provided, many obvious and expected differences between labour force status categories were found. These included the following:

- The unemployed were significantly more likely, and the full-time employed significantly less likely, to agree with the 'to increase my chances of gaining employment' reason than each of the other labour force status categories.
- Those in full-time employment were significantly more likely to agree with the 'it was a requirement of my employer at the time' reason than each of the other labour force status categories.
- Those in full or part-time employment were significantly more likely to agree to the reason 'to increase my chances of promotion in current employment' compared to the unemployed and those not in the labour force.
- The 'to train for re-entry into the workforce' reason was agreed to significantly less by full-time and part-time employees, and more by the unemployed and those not in the labour force.
- The unemployed and those not in the workforce were significantly more likely to agree to the reason 'to be eligible for financial assistance' compared with the full-time employed.

Reason by elapsed time since higher education qualification

Enrolments were grouped into those that undertook 1995 TAFE studies nought to two years, and three or more years since completing their higher education qualification. T-tests of agreement scale means were then conducted between these two groups for each reason to locate significant differences in agreement. This was done to find out if those who undertook TAFE studies shortly after graduating from their higher education qualification did so for different reasons than those who undertook TAFE studies three or more years after graduation.

Most significant differences were related to employment reasons. The two or less years group was significantly more likely to agree to the 'to increase my chances of gaining employment', 'it was a requirement of my employer at the time' and 'to increase my chances of promotion in current employment' reasons than the three or more years group (for χ^2-test, p=0.005, 0.001, and 0.001 respectively). This may be due in part to the three or more years group having a greater percentage not in the labour force, 10.6 per cent, compared with 6.8 per cent of those in the two or less years group. The three or more years group also comprised a significantly older group with a mean age of 40 years compared with only 31 years for the two or less years group.

These results point to recent higher education graduates being more likely to undertake TAFE studies for employment reasons, whilst other reasons have generally similar weightings of agreement from both recent and not so recent higher education graduates.

Reason by higher education qualification

As for the analysis of labour force status and reasons, a similar analysis was conducted in relation to higher education qualification level (question A). That is, analysis of variance with Scheffe tests (at the 5% level) were conducted between the highest qualification levels on the means of agreement levels for each reason.

Significant differences were found in relation to only two reasons, namely, the 'to re-train for a different career' and the 'to attain English language skills' reasons.

In relation to the 'to re-train for a different career' reason, only one significant difference was found, namely, those with an undergraduate diploma were significantly more likely to agree with this reason (mean of 2.82) compared to those with a doctorate or higher qualification (mean of 4.13). This result ought, however, be treated with caution as the number of cases of doctorates or higher for this reason was fairly low at 16. This finding nevertheless suggests that those with a doctorate or higher qualification use TAFE to supplement their educational needs in their current employment, whereas those with an undergraduate diploma are more likely to use TAFE as a means of acquiring necessary skills for a career change.

With respect to the 'to attain English language skills' reason, those with a Masters degree were significantly more likely (mean of 3.90) to agree with this reason than those with an undergraduate diploma, degree, or graduate diploma as their highest qualification (means of 4.64, 4.61 and 4.66 respectively). This finding may be due to there being a disproportionately large number of non-English-speaking background people with an overseas Masters qualification who enrolled in TAFE's Adult Migrant English Programme (AMEP).

4.3.4 Appropriateness of TAFE course

Were reasons for undertaking TAFE studies fulfilled?

Respondents were first asked whether they had completed their TAFE studies for each enrolment. Of those that responded to this question, 60.4 per cent of enrolments had been completed by the time of the survey whilst 39.6 per cent remained to be completed.

For each completed enrolment, data were then sought on how generally appropriate the TAFE course was to fulfilling the reasons for enrolling, as indicated at question three. The vast majority of enrolments, 88.1 per cent, indicated that the TAFE studies were 'very appropriate' or 'appropriate' to fulfilling the reasons for undertaking the studies (table 4.11). For 10.6 per cent, the appropriateness of TAFE studies were considered 'borderline' whilst only 1.2 per cent considered the TAFE studies to be 'inappropriate' or 'very inappropriate'. No significant differences in appropriateness of TAFE studies were found between male and female enrolments.

Table 4.11: Enrolments—appropriateness of TAFE studies to fulfilling reasons for undertaking course

Level of appropriateness	Female		Male		Total*	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Very appropriate	195	46.8	146	45.1	341	45.8
Appropriate	175	42.0	138	42.6	315	42.3
Borderline	44	10.6	35	10.8	79	10.6
Inappropriate	2	0.5	2	0.6	5	0.7
Very inappropriate	1	0.2	3	0.9	4	0.5
Total	**417**	**100.0**	**324**	**100.0**	**744**	**100.0**

* Greater than sum of female and male due to missing sex data of some respondents.

To investigate possible differences in perceived levels of appropriateness with respect to whether or not enrollees undertook their TAFE course primarily for vocational reasons, two sub-samples were formed. The first was a 'vocational' group comprising of all enrollees who indicated 'strong agreement' with at least one of the five vocational reasons for undertaking TAFE studies ('to increase my chances of gaining employment', 'it was a requirement of my employer at the time', 'to increase my chances of promotion in current employment', 'to train for re-entry into the workforce' and 'to retrain for a different career'). The second was a 'non-vocational' group comprising all those who neither strongly agreed nor agreed with any of the vocational reasons. The numbers of cases in the vocational and non-vocational groups were 538 and 275 respectively.

Cross-tabulating appropriateness responses with the vocational/non-vocational groupings and calculating the chi-square statistic revealed no significant difference (for χ^2-test, p=0.475). This suggests that the perceived levels of appropriateness were, in general, independent of undertaking TAFE studies for vocational or non-vocational reasons.

Analysis of variance with Scheffe tests (at the 5% level) were conducted between mean ages in appropriateness levels, and between appropriateness level means in labour force status groups, and highest education level groups. In all cases, no significant differences were found.

A number of respondents made comments on the appropriateness of TAFE studies to their needs relating to specific areas of TAFE. These comments are discussed below in the relevant sections dealing with particular items of appropriateness.

Appropriateness of TAFE teaching style

At question five, respondents were asked to rate the appropriateness of various aspects of the teaching style experienced during their TAFE studies. These ratings can only be taken as a broad indicator due to the fact that any particular enrolment may have experienced a range of teaching styles.

Figure 4.6 displays the findings. As may be inferred from the previously reported high level of appropriateness indicated at the more general question (question four), the majority of respondents indicated each teaching style element questioned to be appropriate or adequate.

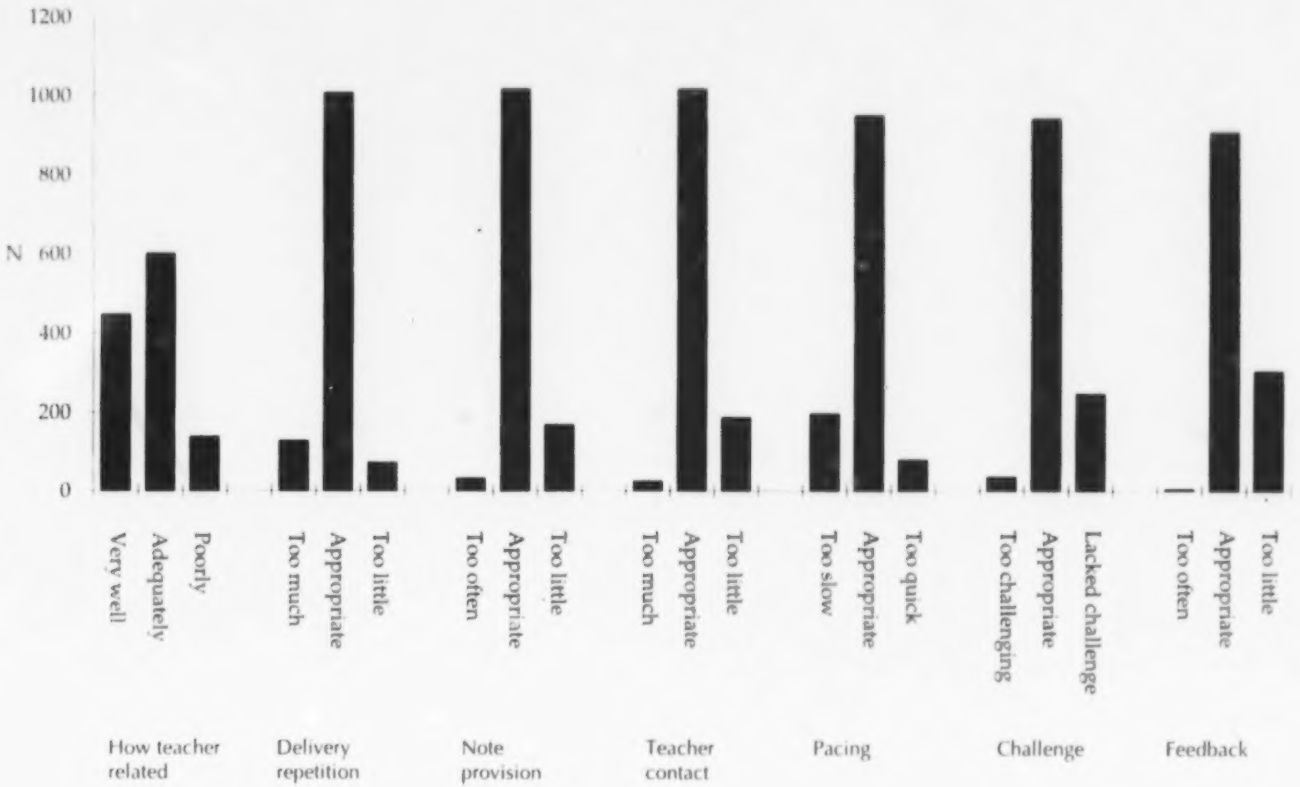
Pacing of course

For 77.5 per cent of enrolments, the pacing of the course was considered appropriate whilst 16 per cent and 6.5 per cent thought it too slow or too fast respectively. Although some mentioned that the course was paced slower than what would have been ideal for themselves, they still thought it to be appropriate in the sense that the majority of the class required the extra time to pick up the required skills. Of the minority that considered the pacing to be inappropriate, the findings suggest that, on balance, higher education graduates find the pacing of TAFE courses too slow.

No significant differences in the rating of course pacing were found between male and female enrolments or vocational/non-vocational groupings. However, an analysis of variance with Scheffe test (at the 5% level) revealed that the mean age of enrolments who found the pacing too slow, 35.1 years, was significantly less than the mean ages of enrolments who found the course pacing adequate or too quick (38.8 and 39.5 years respectively). This suggests that the younger higher education graduates are more likely to find the pacing of courses too slow.

One possible contributing reason to the above finding may have been that younger graduates are more likely to have recently completed their higher education qualification and therefore be in more of a study-oriented mode than older graduates who may have not studied for some time. Also, analysis of variance with Scheffe test found that the mean elapsed time since completing the highest education qualification of enrolments that considered the pacing too slow, 8.2 years, was significantly less than for those who thought the pacing appropriate at 12.1 years.

Figure 4.6: Enrolments—appropriateness of various aspects of teaching style



Regarding the only two award courses for which 35 or valid responses were received, namely, the Associate Diploma of Information Systems and the Certificate in Women's Studies, significant differences were found in relation to the rating of course pacing for the former only. Here, Associate Diploma of Information Systems enrollees were significantly more likely than others to rate the pacing as too quick (for χ^2-test, $p=0.000$), with 25.6 per cent, 66.7 per cent and 7.7 per cent rating the pacing of this course as too quick, appropriate, or too slow respectively.

The problem most commented on by respondents with regard to pacing was that in a class of widely mixed abilities or experiences, either the course is paced too slow for the brighter students or too fast for the slower students:

> *One subject mixed school leavers with higher education graduates. This subject was a disaster with the lecturer unable to pace the course to either group. Please where possible do not do this because of the problems it creates for the lecturer let alone the students.*
>
> *Pace/style of teaching was a major reason why I did not continue at TAFE (too slow, went off on tangents, too basic). Assumed little study skills resulting in a lot of time being spent talking about how to write an essay/report.*
>
> *The problem I found was in having classes with some who had never studied before—this slowed down everyone and everything.*
>
> *Didn't allow for individual differences between fast and slow workers. We basically had to wait while the slow people caught up.*

A number of those who experienced too slow a pace sought greater self-pacing of courses as did a number of other students, whilst a number of those who undertook self-paced courses commented favourably on the ability to be able to work at one's own pace:

> *It is difficult with a class of mixed education standards—more flexibility for some to take charge of their own learning programme and needs, and for others to have more supervision and guidance when needed, would help.*
>
> *Greater self-pacing of courses would be helpful.*
>
> *The fact that my course was self-paced, resource based (not lecture driven) was of high importance when selection occurred. It pays due credit to the maturity, self-reliance, autonomy and independence many of this type of student [higher education graduate] has. . .*
>
> *The self-paced system . . . is very appropriate and flexible for higher education students—it means you can work at your own speed and be less reliant on student/lecturer interaction or 'classroom' teaching.*

One student commented that after experiencing university, the classroom teaching style was too restricting:

> *Being accustomed to self-paced, self-directed study at university, I found the teacher-directed classroom environment too restricting.*

One student specifically takes external studies only so as to avoid the problems encountered with mixed ability classes:

> *I almost always study externally so that I can work at my own pace and not worry about the distractions of younger or less academically experienced students. It is also far more economical with respect to time to quickly read through the course notes and do my own research rather than work with a class. Therefore I would be interested in seeing more external courses being offered.*

Thus although the majority of respondents saw the pacing of courses as being generally appropriate, many would appreciate or prefer more flexibility and self-pacing of courses.

Amount of teacher contact

For most enrolments, 82.7 per cent, the amount of contact with teachers or lecturers was considered appropriate whilst 2.0 per cent thought there was too much contact and 15.2 per cent too little contact. Thus although higher education graduates in TAFE value greater self-pacing of courses, indications are that they still value regular contact and access to teachers.

Although no significant differences between males and females were found in relation to the rating of amount of teacher contact, the mean age of enrolments who thought it too little, 39.1 years, was significantly greater than the mean age of enrolments who thought it too much at 33.6 years. Older graduates were therefore more likely than those younger to want a greater amount of teacher contact.

No significant difference was found between the vocational and non-vocational groupings with respect to the rating of amount of teacher contact.

Significant differences were found in relation to the rating of amount of teacher contact for Associate Diploma of Information Systems enrollees. This group was found to be significantly more likely than others to rate the amount of teacher contact as being too little (for χ^2-test, p=0.000), with 0.0 per cent, 62.5 per cent and 37.5 per cent rating the amount of teacher contact in this course as too much, appropriate, or too little respectively.

Feedback on progress

Although three quarters of enrolments thought that the amount of feedback on progress was adequate, a significant percentage, 25 per cent, indicated that they thought there to be too little feedback. This may also tie in with the above finding that a greater proportion of enrolments thought there to be too little contact with teachers rather than too much. On balance, therefore, higher education graduates clearly thought there to be too little feedback.

Although no significant differences in the rating of the amount of feedback were found in relation to age or sex, significant differences were found between the vocational and non-vocational groupings (for χ^2-test, p=0.035). Here, a greater percentage of the vocational group rated the

70

amount of teacher contact as being too little, 27.0 per cent, compared with 19.4 per cent of the non-vocational group.

Significant differences were found in relation to the rating of amount of feedback for Associate Diploma of Information Systems enrollees. This group was found to be significantly more likely than others to rate the amount of feedback as being too little (for χ^2-test, p=0.011), with 0.0 per cent, 55.0 per cent and 45.0 per cent rating the amount of feedback in this course as too much, appropriate, or too little respectively.

Repetition of delivery

For 83.4 per cent of enrolments, the repetition of delivery was considered appropriate whilst 6.0 per cent thought it too little and 10.6 per cent too much. The greater percentage considering the repetition to be too much rather than too little probably derives from the problem of having classes with a wide range of abilities. This results in higher education graduates having to sit through the lecturer having to repeat matter for the slower students in the class.

Nevertheless, despite mixed background classes, the vast majority considered the repetition of delivery to be appropriate. This may have been due in part to only 19.2 per cent of enrolments being in a very similar or similar field of study to that in the higher education studies. For most, being in a new field of study meant requiring just as much repetition of delivery as for other students regardless of the amount of prior study in unrelated fields.

Ratings of delivery repetition were not found to be significantly different between the sexes. However, enrolments who thought the repetition to be too much were significantly younger (mean age of 35.8 years) than enrolments that rated the repetition of delivery to be appropriate or too little (mean ages of 38.4 and 40.1 years respectively).

Significant differences were also found between the vocational and non-vocational groupings (for χ^2-test, p=0.046) with a greater percentage of the vocational group rating the repetition of delivery as being too much, 12.4 per cent, compared with 6.8 per cent of the non-vocational group.

Significant differences were found in relation to the rating delivery repetition for Associate Diploma of Information Systems enrollees. This group were found to be significantly more likely than others to rate delivery repetition as being too little (for χ^2-test, p=0.000), with 5.1 per cent, 69.2 per cent and 25.6 per cent rating delivery repetition in this course as too much, appropriate, or too little respectively.

Challenge of course

Just over three quarters of enrolments, 76.9 per cent, indicated that the challenge offered by the course was adequate. Only 2.9 per cent thought the course too challenging whilst 20.1 per cent thought it lacked a challenge. This significant percentage considering the course to have lacked a challenge probably stems from the earlier alluded to reasons that often courses were delivered at a pace and in a manner directed towards school leavers and others without prior tertiary study experience.

However, due to most higher education graduates' TAFE studies being in a different field of study to their highest qualification, most considered being presented with new and unfamiliar material a sufficient challenge.

Significant differences were found in the rating of course challenge in relation to sex, age, and the vocational/non-vocational groupings. Although about the same percentages of female and male enrolments thought courses to lack a challenge, around 20 per cent, a greater percentage of female enrolments, 4.1 per cent, than male enrolments, 1.3 per cent, thought courses to be too challenging (for χ^2-test, $p=0.013$). It follows that overall, a lower percentage of female enrolments, 75.6 per cent, thought the challenge of courses to be appropriate compared to 79.6 per cent of male enrolments.

Regarding age, the mean age of enrolments that rated courses as lacking a challenge, 34.5 years, was significantly lower than the mean age of enrolments rating the challenge as appropriate or too challenging at 39.0 and 40.9 years respectively.

The vocational group was significantly more likely than the non-vocational group to consider the course to lack a challenge (for χ^2-test, $p=0.020$) with 22.0 per cent and 14.1 per cent indicating this to be the case respectively.

No significant differences in the rating of course challenge were found with respect to Associate Diploma of Information Systems or Certificate in Women's Studies enrollees.

Provision of printed material

Respondents were asked to rate whether they thought the provision of printed materials, such as lecture notes, to be too often, appropriate or too little. The vast majority, 83.4 per cent, considered this provision to be appropriate whilst 2.7 per cent thought provision took place too often and 13.9 per cent too infrequently.

No significant differences in the rating of the amount of note provision were found in relation to age, sex, vocational/non-vocational groupings or with respect to Associate Diploma of Information Systems or Certificate in Women's Studies enrollees.

How teachers related to higher education graduates

Over a third of enrolments, 37.7 per cent, indicated that teachers or lecturers related very well to higher education graduates whilst 50.6 per cent claimed that they related adequately. Only 11.7 per cent thought that teachers related poorly to higher education graduates. No significant differences in the rating of how teachers related to higher education graduates were found in relation to age, sex, vocational/non-vocational groupings or with respect to Associate Diploma of Information Systems or Certificate in Women's Studies enrollees.

The topic of teacher effectiveness and the way teachers related to higher education graduates drew a great deal of comment from respondents. Although a number of respondents made positive comments including excellent teaching style, enthusiasm, excellent delivery of material and the ability to handle a mixed ability class, many also indicated negative experiences.

Some respondents highlighted the fact that teacher quality varied considerably from one course or module to another, for example:

> *I found that the calibre of teaching and professional manner varied markedly. Some of the lecturers were outstanding . . . whilst others were the opposite.*

Specifically in relation to the way teachers related to higher education graduates, positive comments included:

> *I found the lecturers related to adults very well and treated each student as an individual, making no judgments according to their previous education or lack of education.*
>
> *Understood the principles of adult learning, excellent organisation as well as interpersonal skills.*
>
> *Lecturers related well to adult learners and respected their various backgrounds.*

People are generally more prepared or likely to criticise than to praise, thus many negative comments were provided regarding the way teachers related to higher education graduates, including:

> *Lecturers need to be made aware that all students are not alike and particularly that there are sometimes adult students and sometimes well-educated students.*
>
> *Lecturers tended to fail to even notice higher education graduates or mature-age students. Most lecturers treated* all *students as though they have just left high school. The attitude is most prevalent, condescending and patronising.*
>
> *Adult students were treated and spoken to as though we were reluctant teenage apprentices. Staff did not appear to comprehend that adult students were motivated fee-paying clients.*
>
> *I have found little evidence of good practices in Adult Learning put into practice in my TAFE course so far. TAFE seems to be very different in this regard to universities.*
>
> *Lecturers at university made allowances for students who were studying at a higher level, were working or who had families. I saw none of this at TAFE.*

These comments tend to indicate that many graduates saw lecturers as relating to the whole class at the 'school leaver' level rather than acknowledging and making allowances for the more mature students who already have a deal of work or study experiences behind them.

Some respondents went so far as to comment that teachers actually related in a negative manner specifically towards higher education graduates:

> *I hope that tutors will be trained and educated to avoid being jealous of those who are more educated than them in some areas.*
>
> *Some lecturers appear to victimise and 'have it in' for higher education graduates. They appear to feel threatened and thus seek to put us down at every opportunity. I have withdrawn from TAFE courses and/or subjects as a result.*

Most comments provided about TAFE teachers related to their teaching skills or abilities. Again, although some respondents commented on teachers' excellent teaching abilities, most comments provided on this topic were negative, for example:

> *I feel your quality of teaching/presentation is poor (a generally agreed to opinion from young and older students). It can be quite frustrating and off putting to listen to lecturers who have a good knowledge and skill level but cannot get it across.*
>
> *Many of the lecturers were very experienced in their fields but had no teaching skills . . .*
>
> *Lecturers have no background in teaching methods, their knowledge of the subject is fine. However, how information is relayed to us needs to be improved.*
>
> *Some lecturers did not have adequate teaching skills and were clearly floundering with the contents of the course and were threatened by students' questions.*

Thus many graduates appreciated or recognised that many TAFE lecturers possess an extensive knowledge of their subject area and may also have lengthy experience as well. However, the main gripe of graduates expressing negative comments was that many teachers lack the necessary teaching skills to impart their knowledge and experiences effectively to students.

Some other respondents with similar views suggested that lecturers should undergo teacher training and that the quality of teaching be monitored and checked, or that the teaching ability of potential teachers should be checked before they are allowed to take classes:

> *Lecturers need some training in teaching skills before being let loose on students!*
>
> *Some lecturers describe themselves [as] 'facilitators' by which they mean that they don't intend to 'teach', they just provide an opportunity for learning. Perhaps the situation would be improved if staff with non-teaching backgrounds were required to undergo some teacher training before taking classes.*
>
> *TAFE should be more selective choosing appropriate lecturers. Just because they know the subject doesn't mean they have the skills or the ability to 'teach' the subject.*
>
> *There is a large variation in the ability between teachers. They might know the material but can be hopeless teachers. Teaching ability should be checked or monitored.*

One respondent expressed resentment that TAFE lecturers were allowed to teach without possessing qualifications that secondary school teachers require:

> *There needs to be a better base to TAFE—teachers who haven't only been through a two day 'Train the Trainer' course—what a joke—we [Grad.Dip.Eds.] train for four years and still are unable to get a job, they train for two days and wammo!—a teacher at the same rate as a graduate!!*

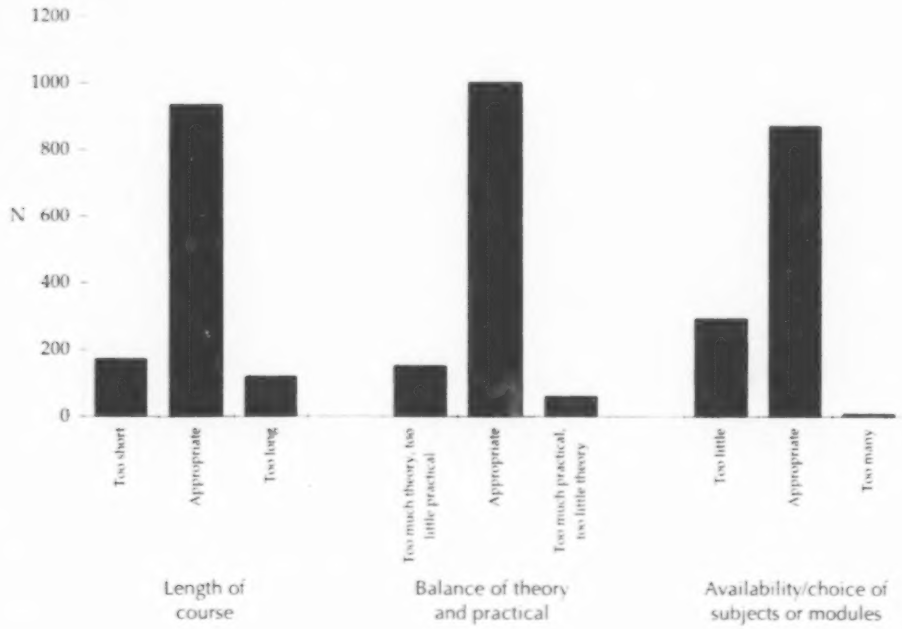
Apart from a lack of teacher training as a cause of inadequate teaching staff, one respondent suggested that lecturers' employment conditions as another reason for ineffective teaching, namely:

> *TAFE only offers short-term contracts to lecturers that are never really taken by anyone who is truly committed to their work. If TAFE is not committed to looking after their lecturers by offering permanency or the like, then how are they ever going to get committed lecturers and, hence, high quality students.*

Appropriateness of TAFE course design

Question six in the main questionnaire form asked respondents to rate how appropriate they felt various aspects of course design or structure were, namely, the length of the course, the balance of theory and practical, and the availability of subject or module options. Responses are illustrated at figure 4.7 below.

Figure 4.7: Enrolments—appropriateness of various aspects of course/module design



Length of modules or courses

Just over three quarters of enrolments, 76.7 per cent, thought the length of modules or courses to be appropriate whilst 13.8 per cent thought them to be too short, and 9.5 per cent too long.

No significant differences were found in the rating of the length of modules between the sexes or labour force status groups. In relation to age, the mean of enrolments who rated the length of modules as being too short, 40.9 years, was significantly larger than the mean of enrolments rating the length of modules as appropriate or too long, 38.2 and 35.7 years respectively.

Enrollees who undertook TAFE studies for vocational reasons were significantly more likely than those undertaking TAFE studies for non-vocational reasons only to consider the length of modules too long, with 12.0 per cent and 6.3 per cent considering this to be the case respectively.

Regarding the only two award courses for which 35 or valid responses were received, namely, the Associate Diploma of Information Systems and the Certificate in Women's Studies, significant differences were found in relation to the rating of the length of modules for the latter only. Here, Certificate in Women's Studies enrollees were significantly more likely than others to rate the length of modules as too short (for χ^2-test, $p=0.003$), with 31.4 per cent, 68.6 per cent and 0.0 per cent rating the length of modules in this course as too short, appropriate, or too long respectively.

A number of respondents commented favourably on the appropriateness to their needs of the shorter courses or modules offered by TAFE compared to the longer higher education courses generally. This included being able to enrol in only one module or subject specifically related to one's needs rather than having to enrol in or be committed to a full length course containing only a fraction of what one sought to do. Comments included:

> *I appreciate being able to study just one specific subject and not having to enrol in a whole course.*
>
> *It has not been possible to attend lectures relevant to my professional needs at university without undertaking a commitment to further qualifications. TAFE is a convenient way for working people who just want to upgrade their skills/qualifications.*
>
> *I find your courses fit very well into the personal/professional development areas—particularly your short courses where I can come in and learn what I need without any long-term commitment.*
>
> *The short courses at TAFE have an important place for working higher education graduates as time is usually very precious.*

Balance of theory and practical

Considering that the second most popular reason for undertaking TAFE studies was 'to gain practical skills not obtained in my higher qualification', it is not surprising that for 83 per cent of enrolments, the balance of theory and practical was considered appropriate. Nevertheless, 12.3 per cent of enrolments still considered there to be too much theory and not enough practical in their TAFE course or module. Only 4.7 per cent thought there was too much practical and not enough theory in their course. No significant differences in the rating of the balance of theory and practical were found in relation to sex, age or labour force status.

Enrollees who undertook TAFE studies for vocational reasons were significantly more likely than those undertaking TAFE studies for non-vocational reasons only to consider there to be too much theory and not enough practical in courses, with 14.4 per cent and 7.7 per cent considering this to be the case respectively.

Significant differences were found in relation to the rating of amounts of theory and practical for Associate Diploma of Information Systems enrollees. This group was found to be significantly more likely than others to rate their course as having too much practical and not enough theory (for χ^2-test, $p=0.000$) with 27.0 per cent considering this to be the case. Over half in this course, 54.1 per cent, thought the balance of theory and practical to be appropriate, whilst 18.9 per cent thought there to be too much theory and not enough practical. This trend is therefore in reverse to the overall ratings of the balance of theory and practical.

The general findings emphasise that higher education graduates primarily seek from TAFE the acquisition of practical skills and do not want to be encumbered with more theory learning of the kind so dominant in their prior higher education studies. This is also borne out from the comments made by respondents:

> *TAFE courses should retain their bias toward the technical/practical and leave a bias to theory with the universities.*
>
> *I chose to go to TAFE, not university, because I wanted practical skills. I was disappointed that the courses were becoming more academic and theoretical and not preparing me for office work as well as it could have.*
>
> *I found TAFE to be practically oriented whereas at university everything was theory. It was this aspect of TAFE that encouraged me to undertake further study there and not at university.*
>
> *Short practical skills courses run by TAFE are good for filling in gaps in vocational needs not covered in theoretical courses.*

Associated with the practicality of courses is the link to the 'real world' that courses have. A number of respondents commented favourably on the close link that TAFE courses have to the real world and what a valuable feature of courses this was considered to be:

> *I think TAFE is unique in its connection to the 'real world' and I hope you continue to have this distinction.*
>
> *. . . the edge that TAFE has over universities . . . is closer ties to the 'real-world' businesses and industry practices.*

> *It was refreshing to be taught something we could actually use in the real world.*

One respondent specifically commented on the value of gaining practical skills related to the 'real world' from TAFE courses for the purposes of employability:

> *TAFE courses are far more practical than my university studies. Courses match skills required in the work force. I would always recommend TAFE courses over university and when I used to sit on interview panels, I'd choose a TAFE educated person over a university one.*

Availability/choice of subjects or modules

Just under three quarters of enrolments, 74.6 per cent, indicated that the availability of options or choice of subjects/modules was appropriate whilst 24.9 per cent thought they were too little in number. Thus of those who thought the availability of options or choice of subjects/modules was inappropriate, most thought there to be too little in the choice and availability of modules or subjects.

No significant differences in the rating of availability of options or choice of subjects or modules were found in relation to sex, age or vocational/non-vocational groupings. Although significance was found in relation to labour force status (for χ^2-test, $p=0.005$), this was unreliable due to a third of cells in the crosstabulation having an expected frequency less than five. In any case, the magnitude of differences between the various labour force status categories was not large.

Significant differences were found in relation to the availability of options or choice of subjects/modules for Associate Diploma of Information Systems enrollees. This group was found to be significantly more likely than others to rate their course as having too little availability of options or choice of subjects/modules (for χ^2-test, $p=0.001$) with 51.3 per cent considering this to be the case. The remainder in this course, 48.7 per cent, thought the availability of options or choice of subjects/modules to be appropriate.

Assessment

Although not specifically asked to comment on the appropriateness of assessment methods adopted in their TAFE studies, many respondents expressed strong views with respect to same.

Nearly all comments complained of competency-based assessment and registered a preference for a graded assessment system, such as the following:

> *Course results were only measured as 'CA' or 'CNA'. These were extremely unsatisfactory forms of measurement when you consider the difference between a lazy student who just scrapes through with a basic pass compared to a student who puts in the time and effort to achieve an outstanding result. Why can't you use a similar system to the universities?*

> *There is a need for grading a student's work. Having been through the system some quite 'lazy' students received a pass and so did another (more conscientious) student who probably deserved recognition of a distinction or credit.*
>
> *I feel very strongly that the underlying approach which focusses on minimum requirements for competence makes the learning very shallow and ineffective in the longer term.*

Preferences were also expressed for a graded assessment system with respect to employers:

> *Courses are not properly graded thus have a lack of respect amongst employers as 'everyone' passes.*
>
> *I believe the competency-based studies should be replaced by results which give the grade achieved. It is difficult for an employer to assess a likely candidate when the result achieved is just a pass/fail rating.*

Age, vocational/non-vocational reasons, and the appropriateness of TAFE courses

The preceding sections regarding TAFE teaching style and course design clearly revealed a trend of differences in appropriateness opinions related to client age:

- ❖ Enrolments who found the pacing too slow were significantly younger than those who found the pacing appropriate or too quick.
- ❖ Enrolments who thought the amount of teacher contact was too little were significantly older than those who considered there to be too much teacher contact.
- ❖ Enrolments who considered the repetition of delivery to be too much were significantly younger than those considering the repetition of delivery to be appropriate or too little.
- ❖ Enrolments who found the course to lack a challenge were significantly younger than enrolments rating the course challenge as appropriate or too challenging.
- ❖ Enrolments who found the length of modules to be too short were significantly older than those considering the length of modules to be appropriate or too long.

A number of significant differences were also found between vocational and non-vocational groupings with regard to feedback, repetition of delivery, course challenge, length of modules, and balance of theory and practical. However, the mean ages of the vocational and non-vocational groups (36.7 and 41.6 years respectively) being significantly different (for t-test, p=0.000) suggests these differences may be predominately age related.

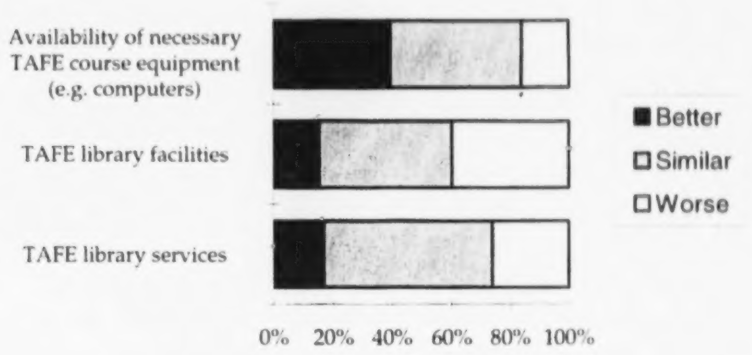
The above findings clearly show that younger and older higher education graduates had different needs in TAFE teaching styles and course design to accommodate their various requirements.

Adequacy of TAFE services and facilities compared with institution of highest qualification

Question seven asked respondents to compare the adequacy of TAFE services or facilities with those available at the institution at which they undertook their highest qualification (figure 4.8).

Of enrolments, 39.5 per cent thought that the availability of necessary TAFE course equipment, such as computers, was better at TAFE than at the institution for the highest qualification compared with only 16.0 per cent who thought this to be worse. The availability of course equipment was thought to be similar by 44.5 per cent of enrolments.

Figure 4.8: Enrolments—comparison of TAFE and higher qualification institution services and facilities



The reverse trend was the case regarding TAFE library services and facilities. Of enrolments, 15.2 per cent thought TAFE library facilities to be better, whilst 45.1 per cent and 39.7 per cent thought them to be similar or worse respectively, compared with library facilities at the institution of the highest qualification. With regard to library services, 16.8 per cent thought TAFE library services to be better, whilst 57.2 per cent and 26.0 per cent thought them to be similar or worse respectively, compared with library services at the institution of the highest qualification. The differences between the responses to the facilities and services questions were significantly different (for χ^2-test, p=0.000) with library facilities more likely to be rated worse than services.

Respondents therefore generally viewed TAFE library services as being of a higher standard to library facilities but both being of a lower standard compared with those offered by the highest qualification institution. However, a number of respondents did comment that they thought it somewhat unfair to compare university library facilities to those of a considerably smaller TAFE institute.

Thus on the whole, respondents saw TAFE as offering a higher standard of equipment availability but a lower standard of library services and facilities compared with the higher education institution.

Most comments that respondents made with respect to TAFE facilities and services related to the times that they were available. Most respondents indicated that the actual course equipment available was similar or better to that in their higher education institution, including these comments:

> *Generally though, I found the facilities at TAFE far more superior in all facets [compared with those at university] i.e. for studying and socialising etc.*
>
> *Many more resources available at TAFE than at university.*

Others indicated that the times of access to services and facilities were too limited:

> *All ancillary services are aimed almost totally at full-time or unemployed students. More regard needs to be taken of students who are employed full time and their requirements, which are often vastly different to those of other students.*
>
> *Availability of computers: access to computers at TAFE on the weekend would have been a help to me due to full-time work and week-night family commitments.*
>
> *The opening times in out of hours are inappropriate for open learning, especially weekends.*
>
> *After course hours use of the computers would have been appreciated.*
>
> *Most services were not made available after hours.*

Considering that many graduates are already full-time employed and are undertaking short TAFE courses to top up their practical skills, TAFE services and facilities need to be made available out of hours to cater to this group in the interests of open learning.

Some respondents found equipment to be out of date and stressed the necessity of TAFE to have up-to-date equipment if their courses are to be of value:

> *Computers and software are out of date. Course focussed on 1993–1994 technology while it is now 1996–1997. For example, Windows 95 is unknown etc. and I need to know this for my business.*
>
> *Up-to-date computers and software are essential for students wishing to undertake computing subjects—the software applications I studied had already been superseded before the subject commenced.*

If TAFE is to provide up-to-date practical skills for graduates (and others) who seek these for their employment or otherwise, then it is essential that up-to-date equipment and software be used to ensure that courses offered are relevant to current needs in the community.

In relation to TAFE administrative procedures, respondents only dealt out negative comments highlighting the unsatisfactory nature of this area in higher education graduates' eyes:

> *I will not study at TAFE again because I found the administrative staff and their record-keeping ability extremely inferior. As a paying customer I expected better treatment.*
>
> *TAFE has many positives over the university sector but it does appear to fall behind the ball in some of its procedures that are not necessarily programme specific, for example, enrolment procedures and resulting procedures, and really needs to tighten these areas to be competitive.*
>
> *Communication between TAFE administration and students, general enrolment and fee-paying procedures, are well below standard and expectation.*
>
> *The administration side of TAFE was not as efficient as university e.g. getting work back on time, getting results.*
>
> *All experiences, apart from administrative, were positive.*

These comments suggest that higher education graduates have experienced a more efficient and effective administration compared to TAFE's. If TAFE wishes to attract graduates, then improvements in the administration of students' enrolments and assessments will be needed.

RPL administrative processes

Related to administrative services, a few respondents commented on the recognition of prior learning (RPL) administrative processes. One student specifically commented that:

> *I appreciate being able to receive recognition of prior learning so that I don't have to repeat a lot of study already done elsewhere.*

However, most comments expressed negative views of the administrative processes required to try and obtain RPL:

> *I think that higher education graduates should get automatic status for subjects such as 'study skills'. The process for applying for RPL is expensive and quite excessive in the amount of paper work required.*
>
> *Obtaining RPL is a tedious, frustrating, nit-picking affair and seems to be nothing more than a money-grabbing idea.*

Thus although RPL is recognised and its principle of allowing credit for previous studies appreciated, higher education graduates view the negative bureaucratic procedures required as outweighing the possible positive benefits.

4.4 Summary of main findings

A profile of respondents

Female respondents made up 60.5 per cent of the sample leaving 39.5 per cent males. The mean age of the sample was 38.6 years and the median and mode both 39 years.

The mean of elapsed years between completing the highest education qualification and undertaking 1995 TAFE studies was 11.4, whilst the median and mode were 10 and 1 year respectively. The higher education cohort of TAFE students is thus very much a mature-age cohort, comprising a group of people who would have many more life and work experiences behind them to the generally perceived TAFE population of fresh school leavers.

The higher education graduate cohort consists mainly of students who have not continuously travelled straight through the school–higher education–TAFE pathway without a number of years break somewhere along the way, and consists of many graduates who view TAFE as providing learning requirements over the length of their working lifetime. TAFE is therefore not generally seen by higher education graduates just as a 'top-up' to a recently completed higher education qualification.

Four fifths of the sample held a degree or higher qualification whilst the other fifth held an undergraduate diploma. Over half of the sample, 54.0 per cent, obtained their highest qualification from a university whilst 8.6 per cent and 23.1 per cent obtained it from a college of advanced education or institute of technology respectively.

Just over half of respondents, 52.0 per cent, were in full-time employment, and 25.6 per cent in part-time employment, at the time of enrolling in their 1995 TAFE studies. Unemployment was the case for 12.8 per cent and 9.7 per cent were not in the labour force. A significantly greater percentage of males, 69.9 per cent, were in full-time employment compared to only 40.3 per cent of females whilst a much greater percentage of females were in part-time employment, 36.6 per cent, compared to only 8.9 per cent of males. The percentage of females not in the labour force being 12 per cent, was twice that for males. Unemployment rates for the female and male samples were 12.7 per cent and 16.3 per cent respectively.

Overall, 44.9 per cent of enrolments were in non-award courses only (see the beginning of section 4.3 for the definition of 'enrolments' for the purposes of this project), this category making up the greatest percentage of enrolments. The three next largest categories in descending order were certificates (C), associate diplomas, and advanced certificates (AC) at 25.9 per cent, 9.6 per cent and 5.5 per cent respectively. A greater percentage of female enrolments, 30.4 per cent, were in certificate (C) courses compared to only 19.0 per cent of male enrolments. On the other hand, male enrolments were made up of 51.2 per cent in non-award enrolments compared with only 40.9 per cent of female enrolments. This is related to the findings that those enrolments in full-time or part-time employment were more likely to be in non-award courses, 55.0 per cent and 39.3 per cent respectively, compared with only 30.0 per cent and 25.4 per cent of unemployed enrolments and those not in the labour force respectively.

Over a third of enrolments, 34.4 per cent, were in stream 3100 (initial vocational courses) whilst most of the remainder where divided amongst streams 3221 (courses which grant partial exemption to other skills courses) 15.1 per cent, 3222 (complete other skills courses) 14.8 per cent, and 3500 (para-professional/higher technician) 13.4 per cent.

The most likely field of study for enrolments was 'TAFE Multi-field education' with 33.6 per cent, followed by 'Business administration, economics' and 'Art, humanities and social sciences' with 25.9 per cent and 10.7 per cent of enrolments respectively. Gender bias was found in a number of fields of study, particularly 'Engineering, surveying' with 14.5 per cent of male but only 1.2 per cent of female enrolments; 'Art, humanities and social sciences' with 14.0 per cent of female enrolments but only 5.5 per cent of male enrolments; and 'Health and community services' with 7.7 per cent of female but only 3.5 per cent of male enrolments.

For over half of enrolments, 56.5 per cent, it was indicated that the fields of study between TAFE studies and the highest higher education qualification were not at all similar. For a further 24.2 per cent of enrolments, it was indicated that the fields of study were only of little similarity. Fields of study were considered very similar or similar for only just under a fifth, 19.2 per cent, of enrolments. Male enrolments were significantly more likely to be of a 'very similar' or 'similar' field of study with just over a quarter, 26.8 per cent being so, compared with only 14.6 per cent of female enrolments. On the other hand, a greater percentage of female than male enrolments, 85.5 per cent compared with 73.2 per cent respectively, were in fields of study of little or no similarity.

Reasons for undertaking TAFE studies in 1995

The most likely reason for higher education graduates to undertake TAFE studies was clearly for personal development, followed closely by the reasons 'to gain practical skills not obtained in my higher qualification' and 'for interest or recreation'.

For half of enrolments, increasing the chances of gaining employment was a strongly agreed to or agreed to reason whilst for 43.8 per cent of enrolments, retraining for a different career was a strongly agreed to or agreed to reason.

Comments made by respondents highlighted the fact that TAFE is necessary for many to acquire practical skills not provided in the higher education sector, even some essential practical skills required to conform to government regulations. Some respondents specifically mentioned the necessity of attending TAFE in order to gain practical skills required to gain employment. Some undertook TAFE due to the lower costs involved compared with the higher education sector.

The granting of credit in TAFE courses for prior studies undertaken was found to be an important factor for only a small minority of higher education graduates contemplating TAFE studies.

Analysis of reasons by other factors

Female enrolments were found to be significantly more likely than males to agree with the 'for interest or recreation' reason even when only enrolments in the labour force were considered. Thus being in or out of the labour force does not appear to be a major underlying explanation for this difference between the sexes. Females were also significantly more likely to agree to the 'to retrain for a different career' reason. Male enrolments were significantly more likely than females to agree to the 'it was a requirement of my employer at the time' reason, even when only considering those enrolments that were employed.

In general, no strong trends or large differences were found in relation to age and level of agreement with the various reasons for undertaking TAFE studies.

Regarding the two most popular reasons for undertaking TAFE studies, 'for personal development' and 'to gain practical skills not obtained in my higher qualification', no significant differences were found between the labour force status categories. With respect to the third most popular reason, 'for interest or recreation', those in part-time employment and those not in the labour force were each significantly more likely to agree to this reason than those in full-time employment or the unemployed.

With respect to the 'to attain English language skills', the only significant differences found were that the unemployed were significantly more likely to agree with this reason compared to the full and part-time employed. This finding may reflect the higher unemployment rate of those from non-English-speaking backgrounds. It nevertheless points out that despite holding a higher education qualification, a number of higher education graduates feel the need to improve their English language skills to make themselves more competitive in the labour market.

Enrolments that undertook 1995 TAFE studies two or less years since completing their highest qualification, were significantly more likely to agree to the 'to increase my chances of gaining employment', 'it was a requirement of my employer at the time' and 'to increase my chances of promotion in current employment' reasons than enrolments that undertook 1995 TAFE studies three or more years after completing their highest qualification. This may be due in part to the three or more years group having a greater proportion not in the labour force. The three or more years group was a significantly older group compared to the two or less years group.

These results point to recent higher education graduates being more likely to undertake TAFE studies for employment reasons, whilst other reasons have generally similar weightings of agreement from both recent and not so recent higher education graduates.

Appropriateness of TAFE course

The vast majority of enrolments, 88.1 per cent, indicated that the TAFE studies were 'very appropriate' or 'appropriate' to fulfilling the reasons for undertaking the studies. For 10.6 per cent, the appropriateness of TAFE studies was considered 'borderline' whilst only 1.2 per cent considered the TAFE studies to be 'inappropriate' or 'very inappropriate'. No significant differences in appropriateness of TAFE studies were found in relation to sex, age or between enrollees undertaking TAFE studies for vocational reasons and those for non-vocational reasons only.

No statistically significant differences between the four most common reasons and appropriateness levels were found. This suggests that the perceived levels of appropriateness were independent of reasons for undertaking TAFE studies. There were also no significant differences found in relation to appropriateness levels and age.

Appropriateness of TAFE teaching style

For 77.5 per cent of enrolments, the pacing of the course was considered appropriate whilst 16 per cent thought it too slow. Only 6.5 per cent indicated that they thought it to be paced too fast. Although some mentioned that the course was paced slower than what would have been ideal for themselves, they still thought it to be appropriate in the sense that the majority of the class required the extra time to pick up the required skills. Those who found the pacing of the course too slow were significantly younger than those who found the pacing appropriate or too quick.

The problem most commented on by respondents with regard to pacing was that in a class of widely mixed abilities or experiences, either the course is paced too slow for the brighter students or too fast for the slower students. A number of those who experienced too slow a pace sought greater self-pacing of courses. Thus although the majority of respondents saw the pacing of courses as being generally appropriate, many would appreciate or prefer more flexibility and self-pacing of courses.

For most enrolments, 82.7 per cent, the amount of contact with teachers or lecturers was considered appropriate whilst 2.0 per cent thought there was too much contact and 15.2 per cent too little contact. Thus although higher education graduates in TAFE value greater self-pacing of courses, indications are that they still value regular contact and access to teachers. Those enrolments who thought there was too little contact were significantly younger than those considering there to be too much teacher contact.

Although three quarters of enrolments thought that the amount of feedback on progress was adequate, a significant proportion, 25 per cent, indicated that they thought there to be too little feedback. On balance, therefore, higher education graduates clearly thought there to be too little feedback.

For 83.4 per cent of enrolments, the repetition of delivery was considered appropriate whilst 6.0 per cent thought it too little and 10.6 per cent too much. Enrolments who thought the repetition to be too much were

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significantly younger to enrolments that rated the repetition of delivery to be appropriate or too little.

Just over three quarters of enrolments, 76.9 per cent, indicated that the challenge offered by the course was adequate. Only 2.9 per cent thought the course too challenging whilst 20.1 per cent thought it lacked a challenge. Due to most higher education graduates' TAFE studies being in a different field of study to their highest qualification, most considered being presented with new and unfamiliar material a sufficient challenge. Enrolments that considered the course to lack a challenge were significantly younger than enrolments considering the challenge of the course to be appropriate or too much.

The vast majority, 83.4 per cent, considered the provision of printed materials, such as lecture notes, to be appropriate whilst 2.7 per cent thought provision took place too often and 13.9 per cent too infrequently.

Over a third of enrolments, 37.7 per cent, indicated that teachers or lecturers related very well to higher education graduates whilst 50.6 per cent claimed that they related adequately. Only 11.7 per cent thought that teachers related poorly to higher education graduates. No significant differences in the rating of how teachers related to higher education graduates were found in relation to age or sex.

Respondents' comments in the area of how teachers related to higher education graduates focussed mainly on TAFE lecturers' teaching skills. Here, most comments suggested the need for TAFE lecturers to acquire teaching skills or for TAFE to ensure that lecturers have sufficient teaching skills before giving courses.

Appropriateness of TAFE course design

Just over three quarters of enrolments, 76.7 per cent, thought the length of modules or courses to be appropriate whilst 13.8 per cent thought them to be too short, and 9.5 per cent too long. Enrolments rating the length of modules as too short were significantly older than enrolments rating the length of courses as appropriate or too long. A number of respondents commented favourably on the appropriateness to their needs of the shorter courses or modules offered by TAFE compared to the longer higher education courses generally.

Considering that the second most popular reason for undertaking TAFE studies was 'to gain practical skills not obtained in my higher qualification', it is not surprising that for 83 per cent of enrolments, the balance of theory and practical was considered appropriate. Nevertheless, 12.3 per cent of enrolments still considered there to be too much theory and not enough practical in their TAFE course or module. Only 4.7 per cent thought there was too much theory and not enough practical in their course.

These findings, along with a number of comments from respondents, emphasised that higher education graduates primarily sought from TAFE the acquisition of practical skills and did not want to be encumbered with more theory learning of the kind so dominant in their prior higher education studies. A number of respondents also commented favourably on the close link that TAFE courses have to the real world and what a valuable feature of courses this was considered to be.

Just under three quarters of enrolments, 74.6 per cent, indicated that the availability of options or choice of subjects/modules was appropriate whilst 24.9 per cent thought they were too little in number. On balance then, higher education graduates considered there to be too little in the choice and availability of modules or subjects.

Many respondents expressed strong views with respect to the competency-based assessment format, saying that they disliked this format of assessment and found it inappropriate. A graded assessment system was said to be much preferred, both from the point of view of providing an incentive to study and work harder in the course to achieve a good result (rather than merely passing), and for employment-related reasons—employers consider a graded assessment more valuable than a mere pass/fail result.

Age, vocational/non-vocational reasons, and the appropriateness of TAFE courses

Significant differences in opinion were expressed on the appropriateness of course pacing, amount of teacher contact, repetition of delivery, the challenge offered by courses and the length of course modules related to client age. These clearly revealed that younger and older higher education graduates have different needs in TAFE teaching styles and course design to accommodate their various requirements.

A number of significant differences were also found between those undertaking their TAFE studies for vocational reasons and those for non-vocational reasons only with regard to feedback, repetition of delivery, course challenge, length of modules, and balance of theory and practical. However, the significantly different mean ages of the vocational and non-vocational groups suggests these differences may be predominately age related.

Adequacy of TAFE services and facilities compared with institution of highest qualification

Of enrolments, 39.5 per cent thought that the availability of necessary TAFE course equipment, such as computers, was better at TAFE than at the institution for the highest qualification compared with only 16.0 per cent who thought this to be worse. The availability of course equipment was thought to be similar by 44.5 per cent of enrolments.

The reverse trend was the case regarding TAFE library services and facilities. Of enrolments, 15.2 per cent thought TAFE library facilities to be better, whilst 45.1 per cent and 39.7 per cent thought them to be similar or worse respectively, compared with library facilities at the institution of the highest qualification. With regard to library services, 16.8 per cent thought TAFE library services to be better, whilst 57.2 per cent and 26.0 per cent thought them to be similar or worse respectively, compared with library services at the institution of the highest qualification.

Thus on the whole, respondents saw TAFE as offering a higher standard of equipment availability but a lower standard of library services and facilities compared with the higher education institution.

Most comments that respondents made with respect to TAFE facilities and services related to the times that they were available in that out-of-course hours access should have been provided, particularly for the needs of those with employment or family commitments.

Other comments suggested that if TAFE is to provide up-to-date practical skills for graduates (and others) who seek these for their employment or otherwise, then it is essential that up-to-date equipment and software be used to ensure that courses offered are relevant to the current needs of employers and the community.

In relation to TAFE administrative procedures, respondents only dealt out negative comments highlighting the unsatisfactory nature of this area in higher education graduates' eyes. They indicated that improvements in the administration of students' enrolments and assessments will be needed if TAFE wishes to attract graduates.

Thus although RPL is recognised and its principle of allowing credit for previous studies was appreciated by some higher education graduates, most viewed negatively the bureaucratic procedures required as outweighing the possible positive benefits.

5 Possible policy responses to issues raised

The generally provided opinion by higher education graduates was that the courses undertaken were considered to be appropriate for fulfilling their reasons for undertaking TAFE studies in 1995. This suggests that no urgent policy responses are required to cater to this cohort of clients. The view was also expressed by a number of higher education graduates that they expected and were prepared to undertake TAFE courses structured or provided in a way suited to the majority of TAFE clients rather than to the minority higher education graduate cohort. This adds further weight to the argument that, in general, no urgent policy responses are required.

However, should TAFE wish to attract more clients from the higher education graduate market, which would appear to be an increasing rather than decreasing market, the survey identified a number of main areas where policy initiatives would achieve this end.

Teaching styles

Of the minority of higher education graduates who thought the pacing of courses to be inappropriate, most thought the pacing to be too slow. A number who thought this sought greater self-pacing. Thus the introduction of more self-paced courses would help to overcome the frustrations experienced by those considering courses to be paced too slowly.

Despite valuing greater self-pacing of courses, of the minority of graduates who thought the amount of contact with teachers to be inappropriate, most thought there not to be enough contact or access. This stemmed somewhat from graduates preferring lecturers to 'teach' rather than merely act as 'facilitators'. Indications were that graduates also want to be able to access teachers outside formal lecture times and to have more feedback on progress.

This suggests a lecturing staff structure that is based more at TAFE institutes rather than have staff, casual or otherwise, that only come to TAFE to give a set lecture or tutorial and who are only available to students at those times.

Of graduates who thought the challenge offered by their course was inappropriate, most felt that courses lacked a challenge. Possible responses to this area could be to structure courses to allow 'brighter' or more experienced students to tackle more advanced problems whilst those slower in the class complete a section of work, or to stream courses to cater separately for more and less experienced students.

Many observations were made by respondents concerning a perceived lack of teaching skills held by a number of TAFE lecturing staff. This calls for a policy of either requiring teaching staff to hold or undertake appropriate teacher training, or to be assessed on their teaching abilities before being allowed to provide a course. Respondents were generally satisfied with the way that TAFE lecturers related to higher education graduates. However, indications were that it may be of benefit in a number of cases to at least make lecturers aware that they may be lecturing a number of higher education graduates or adult learners, rather than only a class of recent school leavers. In this way, they may adjust their teaching methods to adapt to a mixed group.

Course design

As the reasons for undertaking TAFE studies and respondents' comments clearly indicate, higher education graduates primarily undertake TAFE courses to gain practical skills. Thus although over 80 per cent of enrolments thought the balance of theory and practical to be appropriate, 12.3 per cent thought there to be too much theory and not enough practical in their courses. To continue catering to the higher education cohort, then, policy must maintain or even increase the practical and 'real world' nature of TAFE courses rather than go down the path of becoming 'more academic' in nature.

Strong dislike of the competency-based form of assessment was expressed by respondents along with a definite desire for graded assessment. The latter was considered to give an incentive for students to gain more from courses and also as providing more valuable information to employers. Thus, at least as far as the higher education graduate cohort is concerned, assessment policies should be reassessed and the possibility of providing graded assessment should be explored.

Services and facilities

Due to the strong practical focus and 'real world' appropriateness sought from TAFE courses by higher education graduates, a number of respondents expressed the need for TAFE to have up-to-date equipment and software. TAFE therefore needs to adopt a policy of providing up-to-date equipment and instruction on same for courses to be relevant to the current needs and requirements of the community.

A number of respondents indicated difficulties accessing TAFE equipment due to limited times of availability. In the interests of flexible learning, particularly in relation to catering for those with family or work commitments, TAFE facilities and services need to be made available during out-of-course hours.

Respondents' general negative comments regarding the efficiency of TAFE administrative services, including enrolment and assessment processing and notification, suggests that a policy of implementing more efficient administrative services is required.

Related to administration are the processes related to recognition of prior learning (RPL). Although respondents appreciated the principle of RPL, they saw the bureaucratic procedures required to gain same as outweighing the possible positive benefits. Although many respondents certainly do not want to have to repeat prior learning, they also do not want to have to undertake masses of paperwork and procedures to gain RPL. A more streamlined and efficient policy of granting RPL therefore needs to be adopted if higher education graduates are to avail themselves of this service and view it in a positive light.

Future research possibilities

An area that stood out with a consistent trend in differences of opinion was the appropriateness of TAFE teaching style in relation to age. Younger and older respondents had significant differences in opinion on the appropriateness of course pacing, amount of teacher contact, repetition of delivery, challenge of the course, and the length of modules offered.

Given these differences, research ought to be conducted on TAFE's role in the provision of vocational education and training for the adult or mature-age market and whether or not TAFE is catering to the needs of different age groups.

The basis of research for this report could also be extended to a national level to identify differences between the States and Territories in the levels of higher education graduates undertaking TAFE courses and the reasons why they do.

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Appendix A

TAFE course stream classifications

TAFE course stream classifications

The following is an extract from ACVETS (1995, pp.346-349) which provides both brief and more detailed descriptions of the seventeen-group stream classification for TAFE courses.

Brief description:

Stream	Description
1000	Recreation, leisure and personal enrichment
2100	Basic education and employment skills
2200	Education preparation
3100	Initial vocational courses—operatives
3211	Courses which grant partial exemption to recognised trade courses
3212	Complete trade courses
3221	Courses which grant partial exemption to other skills courses
3222	Complete other skills courses
3300	Trade technician/ trade supervisory
3400	Para-professional/ technician
3500	Para-professional/ higher technician
3600	Professional
4100	Courses subsequent to an initial vocational course—at operative level
4200	Courses subsequent to an initial vocational course—at a skilled level
4300	Courses subsequent to an initial vocational course—at a trade level
4400	Courses subsequent to an initial vocational course—at a para-professional/ technical level
4500	Courses subsequent to an initial vocational course—at a para-professional/ higher technician level or higher

Detailed descriptions:

Stream 1000 courses are directed towards the encouragement and development of creativity, social and personal pursuits, and skills which enable people to make more effective use of leisure time.

Stream 2100 courses provide remedial education or involve other preparatory activities to enable participation in subsequent education or social settings, and are of a type which aims to achieve basic skills and standards.

Stream 2200 courses provide remedial education or involve other preparatory activities to enable participation in subsequent education or social settings, and are of a type which prepares students for further education.

Stream 3100 courses provide initial education and training for entry into vocations requiring a level and range of skills less than is normally required for a tradesperson. They generally require minimal educational qualifications for entry, would be of short duration, and would emphasise a single activity which can be performed upon completion of the course.

Stream 3211 courses are those which provide partial exemption from recognised trade courses. Courses which cover some trade skills but **do not** grant partial exemption from trade courses should be classified elsewhere.

Stream 3212 courses are complete trade courses which provide initial education and training for entry to a specific trade. Such vocations require a high degree of skill, usually in a wide range of related activities, performed with minimal direction and supervision.

Stream 3221 courses are those which provide partial exemption to courses for vocations which are not recognised as trades but which require a range of skills at a similar level.

Stream 3222 courses are complete skills courses which provide initial education and training for entry to vocations which are not recognised trades but which require a range of skills at a similar level. Such vocations require a high degree of skill, usually in a wide range of related activities, performed with minimal direction and supervision. In contrast to operatives, persons in such vocations are competent to carry out a broad range of related tasks.

Stream 3300 courses provide initial education and training in skills at a level higher than trade or trade-equivalent skills. They may include skills needed for supervision, but do not generally provide the level or breadth of specialisation which is provided through courses for paraprofessionals.

Stream 3400 courses are designed to provide initial education and training to develop the breadth of specialised skills required for employment in paraprofessional vocations. Work in such vocations requires the exercise of judgement and may involve specialist functions, and is carried out primarily in support of professionals or other paraprofessionals, or independently.

Stream 3500 courses provide initial education and training to develop specialised skills beyond those developed in stream 3400 courses, in terms of depth or scope of skills. They prepare students for employment in paraprofessional vocations which may involve a variety of specialised functions and require the exercise of judgement.

Stream 3600 courses provide initial education and training at a higher level than paraprofessional courses, and include courses which lead to employment in vocations comparable to those entered by graduates of Diploma (UG2) courses accredited by the Australian Council of Tertiary Awards.

Stream 4100 courses are operative level courses designed to be undertaken subsequent to the completion of a stream 3100 course or subsequent to an on-the-job training equivalent. They are designed to extend the depth or breadth of skills which would be acquired in a stream 3100 course. The extension of skills may be related to the vocational skills acquired in the initial course or to skills in a new vocational area.

Stream 4200 courses are skilled level courses designed to be undertaken subsequent to the completion of a stream 3212 or stream 3222 course, or subsequent to an on-the-job training equivalent. They are designed to extend the depth or breadth of skills which would be acquired in a stream 3212 or stream 3222 course. The extension of skills may be related to the vocational skills acquired in the initial course or to skills in a new vocational area.

Stream 4300 courses are designed to be undertaken subsequent to the completion of a stream 3300 course (or equivalent) or subsequent to the acquisition of an equivalent level of skills through on-the-job training. They are designed to extend the depth or breadth of skills which would be acquired through a stream 3300 course or on-the-job training leading to equivalent skills. The extension of skills may be related to the vocational skills acquired initially or to skills in a new vocational area.

Stream 4400 courses are designed to be undertaken subsequent to the completion of a stream 3400 course or subsequent to the acquisition of an equivalent level of skills through on-the-job training. They are designed to extend the depth or breadth of skills acquired through a stream 3400 course or on-the-job training leading to equivalent skills. The extension of skills may be related to the vocational skills acquired initially or to skills in a new vocational area.

Stream 4500 courses are designed to be undertaken subsequent to the completion of a stream 3500 course or a higher level course, or subsequent to the acquisition of an equivalent level of skills through on-the-job training. They are designed to extend the depth or breadth of skills acquired through a stream 3500 course or a higher course or on-the-job training leading to equivalent skills. The extension of skills may be related to the vocational skills acquired initially or to skills in a new vocational area.

Appendix B

Survey instruments

Covering letter to higher education graduates in TAFE award courses *82*

Survey instruments for higher education graduates in TAFE award courses *83*

Covering letter to higher education graduates in TAFE non-award courses only *89*

Survey instruments for higher education graduates in TAFE non-award courses only *91*

NCVER
A.C.N. 007 967 311

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR VOCATIONAL
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25 September 1996

<title> <first_name> <surname>
<address>

Dear <title> <surname>

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd (NCVER) has been commissioned by the South Australian Department for Employment, Training and Further Education (DETAFE) to do a survey of people who held a higher education qualification prior to enrolling in TAFE studies in 1995.

The survey aims to find out the reasons why those already holding a higher education qualification undertook TAFE studies and whether or not these studies met higher education graduates' needs and expectations. This information will be used to help make improvements to TAFE courses for the needs of higher education graduates.

As the number of people that may be surveyed is quite small, it is very important that **everybody** in this survey answers so that meaningful results are gained. I therefore urge you to ***please*** participate in the survey—your assistance will be very much appreciated!

DETAFE has provided contact information to NCVER to enable surveying to take place. Your answers will be treated with the strictest confidence. Information from this survey will not be used in any way that will enable the identification of individuals.

DETAFE records show that you were enrolled in the following TAFE course(s) in 1995:

<course 1>
<course 2>
<course 3>
<course 4>
<course 5>

Please complete all the enclosed forms commencing with the yellow questionnaire titled 'Survey of higher education graduates in TAFE courses in 1995' and return them to NCVER in the reply paid envelope provided (**no** postage required) by **Wednesday 9 October**. Should you have any queries about the survey, please do not hesitate to contact me at NCVER on (08) 8332 7822.

Many thanks for your help!

Yours sincerely,

M. C. Werner

(Dr) Mark Werner
Survey co-ordinator

Quality Endorsed Company

Survey of higher education graduates in TAFE courses in 1995

Please circle one response for each of the following questions, __for example__:

Were you studying part-time or full-time?

Full-time	1
Part-time	2

HIGHER EDUCATION COURSE DETAILS

A **What is the HIGHEST qualification you obtained BEFORE you undertook TAFE studies in 1995?**

Undergraduate Diploma	1
Degree	2
Graduate Diploma	3
Postgraduate Bachelor Degree	4
Masters degree	5
Doctorate or higher qualification	6

Other (please specify) ....

B **Please write the full name of your highest qualification:**

....

C **In which year did you complete your highest qualification?** ....

D **What type of institution did you obtain your highest qualification from?**

University	1
Institute of technology	2
College of Advanced Education	3
Teachers' College	4
TAFE	5— Go to QE

Other (please specify) ....

If an institution other than TAFE, were your 1995 TAFE studies the first TAFE studies you enrolled in since completing your highest qualification?

Yes	1
No	2

EMPLOYMENT STATUS AT ENROLMENT IN 1995 TAFE STUDIES

E **Please indicate your employment status at the time of enrolling in your 1995 TAFE studies:**

Full-time employed	1
Part-time employed	2
Not employed but actively seeking employment	3
Not employed and not seeking employment	4

PLEASE TURN OVER

F **Please make any general comments regarding aspects of your TAFE education relevant to the needs of higher education graduates here:**

This information will be used to help make improvements to TAFE courses for the needs of higher education graduates.

Our records show that you were enrolled in one or more TAFE courses in 1995, as listed in the covering letter.

Please complete ONE of the '1995 TAFE course questionnaire' forms enclosed for EACH TAFE course that you were enrolled in for 1995.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION!
Please return this form and any other completed
forms in the reply paid envelope provided.

1995 TAFE course questionnaire

Please complete ONE of these forms FOR EACH TAFE course that you were enrolled in for 1995.

1 **Please write the name of the 1995 TAFE course that you were enrolled in from the list provided in the covering letter for which you are answering the following questions:**

....

2 How similar is the field of study in your highest qualification to the field of study in your TAFE course listed at Q1?

Very similar	1
Similar	2
Little similarity	3
Not at all similar	4

3 Please circle your response indicating whether you strongly agree (1), agree (2), are neutral/not sure (3), disagree (4), or strongly disagree (5) with each of the following reasons for undertaking your 1995 TAFE course listed at Q1:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral/ Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
To increase my chances of gaining employment	1	2	3	4	5
It was a requirement of my employer at the time	1	2	3	4	5
To increase my chances of promotion in current employment	1	2	3	4	5
To train for re-entry into the workforce	1	2	3	4	5
To retrain for a different career	1	2	3	4	5
To get into another course of study	1	2	3	4	5
To gain practical skills not obtained in my higher qualification	1	2	3	4	5
To attain English language skills	1	2	3	4	5
To be eligible for financial assistance (e.g. AUSTUDY/ABSTUDY)	1	2	3	4	5
For personal development	1	2	3	4	5
For interest or recreation	1	2	3	4	5
Couldn't think of anything else to do	1	2	3	4	5

Other (please specify) ....

....

4 Have you completed your 1995 TAFE course listed in Q1?

Yes	1
No	2— **Go to Q5**

If YES, how appropriate generally was the TAFE course listed in 1 to ....fulfilling your reasons for undertaking it as indicated in Q3?

Very appropriate	1
Appropriate	2
Borderline	3
Inappropriate	4
Very inappropriate	5

5 How did you find each of the following aspects of teaching style in your TAFE course listed in Q1?

Pacing of course was:

Too slow	1
Appropriate	2
Too quick	3

Amount of contact with teachers/lecturers was:

Too much	1
Appropriate	2
Too little	3

Feedback on my progress was:

Too often	1
Appropriate	2
Too little	3

How repetitive was the delivery?

Too repetitive	1
Appropriate	2
Not repetitive enough	3

How challenging was the course?

Too challenging	1
Appropriate	2
Not challenging enough	3

Provision of printed material was:

Too often	1
Appropriate	2
Too little	3

Teachers/lecturers generally related:

Very well to higher education graduates	1
Adequately to higher education graduates	2
Poorly to higher education graduates	3

Please comment on any other aspects of teaching style in TAFE courses relevant to higher education graduates:

....

....

....

6 **How appropriate did you find the following aspects of the TAFE course listed in Q1 to your needs?**

Length of course was:

Too short	1
Appropriate	2
Too long	3

Balance of theory and practical:

Too much theory and not enough practical	1
Appropriate	2
Too much practical and not enough theory	3

Availability of options or choice of subjects/modules was:

Too little	1
Appropriate	2
Too many	3

Please comment on any other aspects of TAFE course design relevant to higher education graduates:

....

....

....

7 **How would you compare the adequacy of the following TAFE services/facilities to those available at the institution at which you did your highest qualification?**

	Better	**Similar**	**Worse**
TAFE library facilities were generally	1	2	3
TAFE library services were generally	1	2	3
Availability of necessary TAFE course equipment (e.g. computers) was	1	2	3

Please comment on any other aspects of TAFE services and facilities relevant to the needs of higher education graduates:

....

....

....

8 **On the basis of your highest qualification, did you apply for credit transfer/status into your 1995 TAFE course as listed in Q1?**

Yes	1— **Go to Q9**
No	2— **Go to Q10**

9 **If YES in Q8, please indicate which of the following benefits your saw in gaining credit transfer/status (circle all that apply):**

I would complete my TAFE course faster	1
I would not repeat studies I had already done	2
I would save money (fees, books, materials, transport)	3
I would get into the workforce faster	4

Other (please specify) ....

Now go to Q11

10 **If NO in Q8, please indicate why you did not apply for credit transfer/status (circle all that apply):**

I did not know that I could	1
I knew I could but I could not be bothered	2
I knew credit was not available	3
I wanted to do the whole course, despite repeating some previous studies	4
I did not want to affect my AUSTUDY/ABSTUDY eligibility	5
I was discouraged by TAFE staff from applying for credit	6

Other (please specify) ....

Now go to 12

11 **Did you receive credit in your 1995 TAFE course listed in Q1 due to your higher qualification?**

Yes	1
No	2 — **Go to 12**

If YES, would you still have enrolled in the 1995 TAFE course listed in Q1 if credit were not granted?

Yes	1
No	2

12 **THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION! Please return this form and any other completed forms in the reply paid envelope provided.**

NCVER

A.C.N. 007 967 311

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION RESEARCH LTD

252 Kensington Road, Leabrook
South Australia 5068, Australia
Phone (08) 332 7822 Fax (08) 331 9211

25 September 1996

<title> <first_name> <surname>
<address>

Dear <title> <surname>

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd (NCVER) has been commissioned by the South Australian Department for Employment, Training and Further Education (DETAFE) to do a survey of people who held a higher education qualification prior to enrolling in TAFE studies in 1995.

The survey aims to find out the reasons why those already holding a higher education qualification undertook TAFE studies and whether or not these studies met higher education graduates' needs and expectations. This information will be used to help make improvements to TAFE courses for the needs of higher education graduates.

As the number of people that may be surveyed is quite small, it is very important that **everybody** in this survey answers so that meaningful results are gained. I therefore urge you to ***please*** participate in the survey—your assistance will be very much appreciated!

DETAFE has provided contact information to NCVER to enable surveying to take place. Your answers will be treated with the strictest confidence. Information from this survey will not be used in any way that will enable the identification of individuals.

DETAFE records show that you were enrolled in one or more TAFE subjects/modules in 1995.

Please complete all the enclosed forms commencing with the yellow questionnaire titled 'Survey of higher education graduates in TAFE studies in 1995' and return them to NCVER in the reply paid envelope provided (**no** postage required) by **Wednesday 9 October**. Should you have any queries about the survey, please do not hesitate to contact me at NCVER on (08) 8332 7822.

Many thanks for your help!

Yours sincerely,

M. C. Werner

(Dr) Mark Werner
Survey co-ordinator

Quality Endorsed Company

Survey of higher education graduates in TAFE studies in 1995

Please circle one response for each of the following questions, for example:

Were you studying part-time or full-time?

Full-time	1
Part-time	2

HIGHER EDUCATION COURSE DETAILS

A What is the HIGHEST qualification you obtained BEFORE you undertook TAFE studies in 1995?

Undergraduate Diploma	1
Degree	2
Graduate Diploma	3
Postgraduate Bachelor Degree	4
Masters degree	5
Doctorate or higher qualification	6

Other (please specify) ....

B Please write the full name of your highest qualification:

....

C In which year did you complete your highest qualification? ....

D What type of institution did you obtain your highest qualification from?

University	1
Institute of technology	2
College of Advanced Education	3
Teachers' College	4
TAFE	5— **Go to QE**

Other (please specify) ....

If an institution other than TAFE, were your 1995 TAFE studies the first TAFE studies you enrolled in since completing your highest qualification?

Yes	1
No	2

EMPLOYMENT STATUS AT ENROLMENT IN 1995 TAFE STUDIES

E Please indicate your employment status at the time of enrolling in your 1995 TAFE studies:

Full-time employed	1
Part-time employed	2
Not employed but actively seeking employment	3
Not employed and not seeking employment	4

PLEASE TURN OVER

F **Please make any general comments regarding aspects of your TAFE education relevant to the needs of higher education graduates here.**

This information will be used to help make improvements to TAFE courses for the needs of higher education graduates.

Our records show that you were enrolled in one or more TAFE subjects/ modules in 1995.

Please complete the enclosed questionnaire titled '1995 TAFE studies questionnaire' which asks questions relating to these subjects/modules.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION!
Please return both completed forms
in the reply paid envelope provided.

1995 TAFE studies questionnaire

2 **How similar is the field of study in your highest qualification to the main field of study in your 1995 TAFE studies?**

Very similar 1
Similar 2
Little similarity 3
Not at all similar 4

3 **Please circle your response indicating whether you strongly agree (1), agree (2), are neutral/not sure (3), disagree (4), or strongly disagree (5) with each of the following reasons for undertaking your 1995 TAFE studies:**

	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Neutral/ Not sure**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
To increase my chances of gaining employment	1	2	3	4	5
It was a requirement of my employer at the time	1	2	3	4	5
To increase my chances of promotion in current employment	1	2	3	4	5
To train for re-entry into the workforce	1	2	3	4	5
To retrain for a different career	1	2	3	4	5
To get into another course of study	1	2	3	4	5
To gain practical skills not obtained in my higher qualification	1	2	3	4	5
To attain English language skills	1	2	3	4	5
To be eligible for financial assistance (e.g. AUSTUDY/ABSTUDY)	1	2	3	4	5
For personal development	1	2	3	4	5
For interest or recreation	1	2	3	4	5
Couldn't think of anything else to do	1	2	3	4	5

Other (please specify) ....

....

4 **Have you completed your 1995 TAFE studies?**

Yes 1
No .... 2— **Go to Q5**

If YES, how appropriate generally were the TAFE studies to fulfilling your reasons for undertaking them as indicated in Q3?

Very appropriate 1
Appropriate 2
Borderline 3
Inappropriate 4
Very inappropriate 5

5 **How did you find each of the following aspects of teaching style in your TAFE studies?**

Pacing was:

Too slow 1
Appropriate 2
Too quick 3

Amount of contact with teachers/lecturers was:

Too much	1
Appropriate	2
Too little	3

Feedback on my progress was:

Too often	1
Appropriate	2
Too little	3

How repetitive was the delivery?

Too much	1
Appropriate	2
Too little	3

How challenging was the course?

Too challenging	1
Appropriate	2
Not challenging enough	3

Provision of printed material was:

Too often	1
Appropriate	2
Too little	3

Teachers/lecturers generally related:

Very well to higher education graduates	1
Adequately to higher education graduates	2
Poorly to higher education graduates	3

Please comment on any other aspects of teaching style in your 1995 TAFE studies relevant to higher education graduates:

....

....

....

6 **How appropriate did you find the following aspects of your 1995 TAFE studies to your needs?**

Length of subjects/modules was:

Too short	1
Appropriate	2
Too long	3

Balance of theory and practical:

Too much theory and not enough practical	1
Appropriate	2
Too much practical and not enough theory	3

Availability of options or choice of subjects/modules was:

Too little	1
Appropriate	2
Too many	3

Please comment on any other aspects of TAFE subject/module design relevant to higher education graduates:

....

....

7 **How would you compare the adequacy of the following TAFE services/facilities to those available at the institution at which you did your highest qualification?**

	Better	**Similar**	**Worse**
TAFE library facilities were generally	1	2	3
TAFE library services were generally	1	2	3
Availability, anywhere on campus, of necessary TAFE course equipment (e.g. computers) was	1	2	3

Please comment on any other aspects of TAFE services and facilities, anywhere on campus, relevant to the needs of higher education graduates:

....

....

....

8 **On the basis of your highest qualification, did you apply for credit transfer/status into any of your 1995 TAFE studies?**

Yes .... 1— **Go to Q9**
No .... 2— **Go to Q10**

9 **If YES in Q8, please indicate which of the following benefits you saw in gaining credit transfer/status (circle all that apply):**

I would complete my TAFE studies faster 1
I would not repeat studies I had already done 2
I would save money (fees, books, materials, transport) 3
I would get into the workforce faster 4

Other (please specify) ....

Now go to Q11

10 **If NO in Q8, please indicate why you did not apply for credit transfer/status (circle all that apply):**

I did not know that I could 1
I knew I could but I could not be bothered 2
I knew credit was not available 3
I wanted to do the whole subject/module, despite repeating some previous studies ... 4
I did not want to affect my AUSTUDY/ABSTUDY eligibility 5
I was discouraged by TAFE staff from applying for credit 6

Other (please specify) ....

Now go to 12

11 **Did you receive credit in any of your 1995 TAFE studies due to your higher qualification ?**

Yes.. 1
No... 2— **Go to 12**

If YES, would you still have enrolled in these TAFE studies if credit were not granted?

Yes.. 1
No... 2

12 **THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION! Please return this form and any other completed forms in the reply paid envelope provided.**

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research is Australia's primary research and development organisation in the field of vocational education and training.

NCVER undertakes and manages research programs and monitors the performance of Australia's training system.

NCVER provides a range of information aimed at improving the quality of training at all levels.

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